



5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creating life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

- (a) the adoption by the teacher of the Guru attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and
- (b) the adoption by the student of the Shishya attitude by the development of—
  - (i) respect for the teacher,
  - (ii) a spirit of inquiry,
  - (iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

*Let noble thoughts come to us from every side*

—Rigveda, I-89-i

S/160

2715



**BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY**

*General Editors*  
**K. M. MUNSHI**  
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63

**DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM**

BY

**ASOKA MEHTA**



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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

S/160

# DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

2715

By

ASOKA MEHTA

*Foreword by*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN



1959

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

CHAUPATTY, BOMBAY



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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages : Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all.



Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,  
NEW DELHI,  
3rd October, 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

## FOREWORD

It is usual to picture the world as being divided into the two hostile camps of communism and capitalism, with Soviet Russia and the U.S.A. as their respective leaders. Superficially, and on a short range view, such indeed appears to be the picture. But capitalism is a played out force of history, and its days are more or less numbered. The natural question that arises then is what will take its place.

Two forces are struggling even now to shape the destinies of mankind. These are the forces of totalitarian communism and of democratic socialism. Of these the first already appears to be triumphant. Such, however, can be the view only of those who believe that man's urge towards freedom can be permanently stanchd by the dictator's heel. I am certain that if the people living under the communist dictatorships are given a chance of expressing their real desires, without any fear of reprisals, they would assuredly throw out their present governments, and not re-establish capitalism, but proceed to build up by trial and error, through failure and success, a democratic socialist society.

How does a democratic socialist society look and work? No one today can answer that question completely. Neither Marx nor Engels nor Kautsky nor Liebknecht nor Luxemburg nor Plekhanov nor Lenin answered that question in full. Nor the picture that Lenin drew of Soviet Russia has been realised there. Lenin had said, for instance, at the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party in 1919, that "there is nothing more stupid than the idea of compulsion with reference to economic relations with average peasants." And yet in no less than two decades, twenty million peasant families were forced, at the risk of death or banishment to Siberia, into two lakhs of collective farms. Perhaps there is no other instance in history where a small minority having captured power was able to coerce such a vast majority of people in such total manner.

But while there is no clear-cut, ready-made picture of democratic socialism its contours are being slowly drawn in many lands by socialists at work. In India these lectures of Asoka Mehta



mark an important advance in that world process of drawing up the map of a new human civilization.

Both critics and friends have often pointed at the spate of communist literature as compared with the thin trickle of our own, and at the definiteness of the communist line on every question in contrast to our vagueness. Not only had communist literature a huge organisation behind it in Moscow which grinds incessantly communist grist for world consumption, but also the intellectual discipline necessary to produce communist literature is elementary and simply acquired. Communist thinking and writing are not bound by the limitations of truth and objectivity. Hard facts, unfriendly statistics, unexpected results, have no effect on communist theorizing. All that is necessary is to lie defiantly according to the Party line. Production of literature under these conditions becomes a simple affair. Whereas, democratic socialism must ever pursue the truth, must weigh every theory on the scales of reality, must re-examine ideas that do not favour facts or yield desired results. The communist functions in an environment in which his critics are silenced under the dictator's whip and as long as you have the whip in your hand none will dare shout. "left deviation," "right deviation," "revisionism," "counter-revolutionary." You can set the hands of the revolutionary clock a whole circle back and yet proclaim brazenly your revolutionary achievements. The democratic socialist on the other hand works in an atmosphere of freedom where millions are free to test his every word on the touchstone of experience, where there is freedom of the mind and any theory or principle is accepted only after free and frank discussion. Therefore, the literature of democratic socialism, being the result of the honest and truthful effort of the human mind, must compare unfavourably in volume with the large-scale manufacture of communist propaganda. As a matter of fact, communist propaganda itself and its distortion of facts and falsification of history make the task of the democratic socialist still more difficult and make him wary and cautious. Therefore the democratic socialist movement not only in India, but also abroad, would be indebted to Asoka Mehta for these lectures into which he has packed so much fundamental thinking seasoned with such conspicuous scholarship. As I read through these lectures I wondered how Asoka Mehta, so busy as a leader

and organiser, could find the time for such wide reading and quiet thinking.

In these lectures Asoka, as he is more familiarly known, has dealt with some of the fundamental problems of democratic socialism. Communism has presented mankind with a particular form of civilization, based on an amoral ethics—a civilization in which every aspect of individual and social life is controlled by an irreplaceable ruling clique. This society has its own political and economic structure and its own theoretical rationalization, which is often as far removed from reality as the north from the south pole.

Thus there is first of all the question of the ethical and philosophical bases of democratic socialism. There are the questions of the nature of the state and of the entire political structure of democratic socialist society, and those of its economic organization. Finally, there is the ensemble of all these in the picture of democratic socialist civilization.

These are difficult questions. The communist answers to them are definite and categorical. Their definiteness is not due to their scientific or empirical certainty or correctness, but, as I have pointed out above, to the fact that within their fold there is none to dispute their authenticity. They are the ideas which the rulers have approved and they must be accepted as right and unquestionable. It does not mean that when there was freedom in the Russian Communist Party, competing ideas were not in the field and they all did not have the stamp of tentativeness and experimentalism. But when the Party itself became monolithic, i.e., came to accept one single leadership, all that changed; and communist thought, at least for the time being, came to be invested with unchallengeable authority. I say "for the time being" advisedly, for even now it does not mean that communist thought does not change. Indeed, shifts in policy are frequent. But by now the superstructure has so been constructed that at every turn of policy, it is Stalin who is invariably right and the left or right or infantile or adventurist or sectarian or bourgeois deviationists are crushed and silenced.



Our answers to these questions cannot be so definitive; nor can we dispose them of by a few quotations from Marx (Indeed, had Marx been alive today he would have been the first to denounce the Russian dictatorship). So, Asoka has answered these questions with the openmindedness of science. If some one else, seeking the same end points out their flaws, or if experience and experimentation make modifications necessary, the body of socialist thought would further be refined and we would be nearer the truth. There was never any doubt as to the ends to be achieved, the goal to be reached. It is only the path to that goal, the means to those ends, that have to be ascertained by untrammelled thought, discussion, experimentation—the essentials of the scientific method. In this endeavour these lectures mark a notable advance.

These lectures having been delivered to a group of persons whose acquaintance with socialism was not deep or extensive, Asoka Mehta had to relate his ideas and conclusions with the background of the entire development of socialist thought. Therefore, each section dealing with a major question is divided into two lectures, or chapters, the first of which gives the reader a brief view of that development. In the second, the question is considered in its contemporary context, and it is here that the author's wide reading illumines the subject matter and gives the reader the requisite perspective.

It is a pity that Asoka has given so little attention to the philosophical base of socialism. He has pleaded his inability to deal with philosophy. But he was being too modest.

The communist is ready to practise every kind of deceit, perjury, cruelty in obedience to the Party. But the communist (though this is certainly not true of the top layers) also takes his doctrine very seriously. He goes through every vile act in the pure belief that Marxian philosophy sanctions, nay enjoins, every villainy necessary for the cause. But if he were persuaded that there was no such warrant in Marxism; that dialectical materialism meant to be the faith of human fulfilment, had been debased into the religion of a totalitarian State, his feeling of being an instrument in a noble cause would disappear, his self-assurance would vanish, doubts would assail him and the communist per-

sonality would split. And then the monolithic structure of communist dictatorship could not remain uncracked. There is evidence already that germs of doubts are sprouting in many communist hearts—in and out of Russia. For these germs to foliate, dialectical materialism must be resurrected and the struggle for human emancipation given a new philosophy. It is a fundamental task to give clarity and vitality to the philosophy of democratic socialism.

The reader, however, will be grateful to the author for his treatment of ethics and culture. The ennobling picture of this new culture that he has drawn ought to be a corrective to the vulgar machiavellism and a humanism that plague leftism in this country, as well as an inspiration to all those who are toiling to build a new civilization.

In the field of practice, the central problem of socialism is so to re-organise the economic and political life of society as to abolish exploitation, inequality and injustice, on the one hand, and preserve on the other, individual freedom and efficiency. This problem has been discussed with an arresting freshness and boldness in the chapters on politics and economics. The full solution of the problem, let it be conceded immediately, is not possible today. But an outline of the general principles has been given; and that is a valuable starting point. The fact is, as any one who has worked in the socialist movement would testify, that there is today not even an elementary awareness of the problem. Does not even the university educated person ask petulantly, "What is the difference between communism and socialism?" To him the painful history since November 1917 is a closed chapter and the task of building a new society is synonymous with destroying the old which he calls revolution. The constructive part of revolution, the creation of a new civilization, appears to him to be a simple process of automatic development, once the destructive part has been accomplished. If this little book creates some awareness of the stupendous problem involved and illumines the way to its solution, a great advance will have been made.

I have no doubt that in the orthodox Marxian circles, which does not mean those who either understand or follow Marx, but those who merely worship the sect that rules in his name, Asoka



Mehta may appear a heretic, a revisionist or worse. When Marxism has been freed from the fetters that Stalinism has fastened on it, the world will know the exact degree of its distortion in Marxist Russia. In the meanwhile those that are not impeded or fascinated by the fetters may march forward believing in human reason and the slowly burning lamp of science.

In the face of communist militancy and aggressiveness, democratic socialism often appears to be on the defensive. There is no need to be on the defensive however; and this temper must change with a truer understanding. Democratic socialism must not be only a barrier against the flood of totalitarian communism but also a call and a challenge even to those already engulfed by that flood. Not only to the peoples of the so-called free part of the world must it offer a way of deliverance, but even to the peoples enslaved by communist dictatorship it must go forth as a proclamation of manumission.

The reader will find that in these lectures the speaker is on the offensive. It is a new and a vital spirit, and if it grips the reader and the movement which Asoka Mehta leads today, a great force would arise in this country which might have something to say about the course of history.

MADRAS,

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

*5th February, 1951*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### FIRST EDITION

Ever since the Socialist Party declared its allegiance to democratic socialism, enquiries have been made about the contents of that ideology. I was therefore happy to take advantage of the lecture series arranged by the Students' Section of the Socialist Party to outline the fundamentals of democratic socialism. These lectures were delivered, on successive days, in October 1950.

The lectures are published here in a book form with only a few changes. The lecture style, with its repetitions and frequent references to the second person plural and the first person singular, is not suited to easy and interesting reading. To have changed all that would have meant an expenditure of time that was not possible for me.

The references to books, usually put within brackets, is to help young socialists in their study. I hope general readers will excuse the intrusion.

If my colleague H. R. S. Rao had not taken down verbatim report of my lectures, the book would not have been ready for publication so soon. To him and to Parasuram and Raghavan, who gladly took over the tedious work of typing, my grateful thanks are due.

In the preparation of the index and the writing of the book as a whole invaluable assistance was given by Vasanti Shroff. Without her sustained interest the book would never have been attempted.

If these lectures help to stimulate thought and lead to a more integrated re-statement of the faith of mid-twentieth century man, I shall feel myself well rewarded.

BOMBAY, *January 1, 1951*

ASOKA MEHTA

### SECOND EDITION

The present edition is a virtual reprint of the first edition. Only minor changes have been made and errors corrected.

Originally I was inclined to revise the book to bring it in line with my present thinking. On further considerations, I found that such a revision would reduce the utility of the book and also not prove to be an adequate vehicle of the thoughts today. Deliberately, I have left the book almost as it stood in 1950.

The reasons are obvious.

The book is, in a sense, two dimensional. It is primarily concerned with the problems, as also the juxtaposition, of democracy and socialism. The dimension of development does not go deep enough.

At present my thoughts are focussed on the understanding of socialism in the context of under-developed economy, where people seek development democratically. Such a conjunction of forces demand a deeper and different study than offered here. The present formulation is however a necessary step. I am republishing the book, almost as it stood in 1950, because I believe it will help others, as it has helped me, to move on to a fuller analysis.

I hope to bring out soon my further study of socialism in undeveloped countries. Partial formulations have already been published as *Socialism and Peasantry*, and as *Politics of Planned Economy*. It should be possible, before long, to round off these fragments with a fuller study. But to it this book remains the key.

YERAVDA CENTRAL PRISON,  
December 1, 1953

ASOKA MEHTA

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### THIRD EDITION

I am grateful to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for bringing out yet another edition of my book, "Democratic Socialism." The book which brings together a series of lectures I gave on the subject in Bombay in 1950 has evoked wide interest in many countries of the world. Not only in the Socialist circles but among nationalist leaders in various countries, e. g., Egypt, Iraq, the book has received considerable attention. I hope the new edition will get the same response that the earlier editions were privileged to receive.

I had made some alterations in the second edition because between 1951 and 1954 my views had changed on certain issues. The new edition is being brought out without any change because I see no need for fresh alterations.

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan had done me the honour of writing an interesting Foreword to the first edition of my book. Since then his views have basically changed. He had criticised me for not discussing dialectical materialism. It is on that very point that J. P. revised his views and ultimately broke with Marxism and was converted to Sarvodaya.

A few months back the Bhavan brought out my book, "Studies in Asian Socialism." The two books together constitute the main corpus of my thoughts.

I have to thank Shri R. P. Parasuram for the ceaseless interest he has taken in the publication of the book.

BOMBAY, October 15, 1959

ASOKA MEHTA



TO  
YUSUF MEHERALLY

WHO LIVED IN HIS LIFE

THE VALUES OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM



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## Lecture I

### SOCIALISM : THE BACKGROUND

It is not easy to review the socialist movement, or give a history of socialist ideas, within the span of eight lectures. Socialism is a science of new society as well as the vision of a new civilisation. It touches modern knowledge and human experience at so many points that any adequate review of socialism would need much time. Situated as we are, we must confine our observations to the scheduled time. Naturally, my observations will have to be generally cursory ; they may likewise prove unsatisfactory to those who have set ideas and pet theories. But I would beg the rest of you to accompany me and look at the vast terrain that is the socialist ideology and the socialist movement from a point of view which can claim to be integrated.

Socialism is usually expounded in two different ways : either a review of socialist ideas is offered in terms of different schools that grew up, or it is sketched in terms of different personalities through whom socialist ideas and movements unfolded themselves. There have been outstanding individuals like Karl Marx or Lenin, men of lesser stature but nonetheless important like Ferdinand Lassalle or Robert Owen, who have played a big part in the development of the socialist movement and whose thought and action have shaped the socialist philosophy. One way, therefore, is to review the development of socialism by focussing attention on these arresting personalities ; the other method is to give a chronological review of the socialist movement and socialist thought in terms of different schools that have emerged from time to time, usually in response to freshly felt needs and newly created situations.

There are two books to which I would like to invite your attention: one *Social-Economic Movements* by Harry W. Laidler, which gives a comprehensive review of the socialist movement and socialist ideas on the basis of various schools of socialist thought and social-economic developments resulting from them ; the other book offers a tentative review of socialism throughout a study of its prominent protagonists: it is Professor Carr's *Studies In*



*Revolution.* G. D. H. Cole's forthcoming trilogy on *Socialist Thought* promises to be of outstanding importance.

### FIVE INGREDIENTS

I do not propose to follow either of these two methods. I would prefer to invite your attention to certain basic ingredients of socialist thought. Once these ingredients become clear, it becomes easy to find why in particular times and in certain circumstances, certain ingredients receive importance. It is also necessary to remember that human beings have a variety of temperaments and a complex of likes and dislikes. All men are not equal nor are all men alike. The uniqueness of man is a fact known to science and recognised by psychology. Men and women respond to different ideas in varying degrees and in a variety of forms, and a movement like the socialist movement, so widespread and sweeping in its objectives and efforts, must find within its folds scope for a variety of responses. It would be wrong to say that "this particular vision of socialism is the final, the irrevocable, the absolute one." There will be differences of nuances, differences in shades of meaning, and all these notes and tones and colours have a place in the *ensemble* that is the socialist movement.

The various ingredients of socialism, as I understand them, are brought together in Chart I.

May I now invite your attention to what I have called the five major ingredients of socialism? You must look at socialism from the points of view of its *appeal*, its *approach*, its *conception of leadership*, its *attitude to the state* and lastly, from the point of view of its *character* or *scope*. Probably these words mean little; it will be my effort to endow them with meaning.

### MORAL APPEAL

What exactly do we mean by *appeal*? Why are you a *socialist*? Why is it that the socialist ideal appeals to you, attracts you? Why is it that you and I, and millions of other persons the world over, are prepared to devote our all to follow this great and shining ideal? What is it in socialism that draws us out of the routine grooves of our life, that inspires us to sacrifice time, energy, resources and even life, if need be? There are two possible appeals: one is the

*ethical appeal*—there is so much injustice in the world that you revolt against it. The social order around us is verily unjust, is morally reprehensible. That there should be conditions that produce a few rich and many poor, wherein the few are permitted to live a life of luxury while millions are denied elementary necessities of life, that workers should be unemployed while factories remain idle, “where wealth accumulates and men decay”—these are aspects of a situation that throw up a moral challenge to all men of conscience. Surely, that a man of property should exploit his fellowmen, that out of their sweat and blood and tears he should mint his profits and live a life of slothful ease, is a situation that sears the conscience of man. There are many, therefore, who have come to socialism because of its ethical appeal. The iniquity of the present situation demands of us an answer and we find that answer in socialism, wherein we feel human beings would realise liberty and equality, wherein division of men between oppressor and oppressed, between exploiter and exploited will disappear and we shall have, for the first time, a society where man will act with man as brother. This ethical appeal is strong.

I do not know how many of you have participated in a working class rally. Every speaker, no matter what be the theme of his speech—whether it be increase in wages, bonus, reduction in hours of work—appeals to the ethical streak in Man : that the fight of the worker, even when he is fighting for higher wages or lower work-load, is a part and parcel of a wider fight for a juster social order. Those who sneer at the ethical aspect of socialism, in practice make full use of the ethical impulse in man.

After all, why did Karl Marx, who was such an intelligent man, devote over thirty years of his life, when his family was starving, when his wife was chronically ill, when he was wont to be thrown out of his rooms because he could not pay the rent, to the elaboration of socialist theory and *praxis* ? He did it because the ethical appeal of socialism was overpowering for him. It was the injustice rampant in the world around him that compelled Marx to turn devotedly his attention to it and develop what he has called “the scientific version of socialism.”

#### INEFFICIENCY

Many of us become socialists because of the *inefficiency around us*. Who has not seen the inefficiency and waste through which



production and distribution is carried on? Lands lie fallow, factories remain idle. There are young men and women, fully trained, in search of employment, who get no jobs. The productive resources of the country remain untouched, unorganised, immobilised, because of the corruption, inefficiency, internal contradictions of the existing society. We turn against capitalism because we see that the capitalist method of production, the capitalist social order, is incapable of resolving, in a rational manner, the problem of production, exchange and distribution. All of you are familiar with the classic illustrations given. Why should there be ten milkmen going round our locality, distributing milk, when probably three men would be able to do it in a co-ordinated way? Imagine our post being brought to us by competing post offices! Thousands of additional postmen would be needed to go round and deliver letters, and there would be such a waste of manpower and of revenues. But because we have a nationalised postal system, we know that one postman is able to cover, say, ten blocks of buildings. Today, a dozen milkmen have to cover the same locality. That is an unplanned, irrational way of distribution. An efficient way of distribution would be for the community to assign a certain number of customers, who would be contiguous, to a particular milkman. This is only a minor instance of waste, which is often quoted in socialist books. You can multiply such instances; you will find that some men become socialists because of the inefficiency of the prevailing social system.

In times of prosperity, it is the ethical appeal of socialism that draws men towards socialism; in times of depression, it is the inefficiency and irrationality of capitalism that draws millions of people towards socialism. There are thus two distinct appeals, and both play a part in converting men to socialism. Which is the more important, which is the less important? That varies from person to person, circumstance to circumstance, and country to country.

#### APPROACH

There are those who feel that the new society cannot be created except through the emergence of new men. The temple of free society demands, as Mrs. Annie Besant put it, the bricks of new individuals. The whole emphasis is on the creation of new men

who would be able to articulate the new society. That is why I call it the *individual approach*.

The other approach says : " No, we have got to think in terms of collective groups of people—the trade unions, kisan panchayats, Socialist Party, youth organisations, women's clubs. These collective expressions of the people will suck into their folds millions of men who through struggles as also through co-operative efforts will qualify themselves for the responsibility of building up of a free and equal society that we call socialism." The distinction is not always marked. For instance, Karl Marx, who was the outstanding exponent of the *collective approach* to socialism, was wont to say that, "before you can create a socialist society, you must socialise human beings." You remember his famous and pregnant remark : "The root is man"; of all social changes, of the tree of life, "the root is man"! Lenin, with his conception of a well-knit, highly organised and conscious party, a party made up of men whose vocation is revolutionary work, had to think in terms of drawing out men, of training them up, of individually picking them up and making them the very substance of his socialist programme.

I would, therefore, like you to remember that we cannot draw here hard and fast distinctions. My effort is to make you realise that there will be socialists who will come and say that "you cannot have socialism, you cannot move towards socialism, unless you create the new type of man." There will be teachers who will say, "build more and more labour colleges, more of workers' educational institutions." It would be wrong to sneer at them, for that too is a shining facet of socialism. There will be others who will favour the collective approach. In the house of socialism there is room for both these as also for other mansions.

### PATTERNS AND PURPOSES

Before we turn to leadership, I would like to invite your attention to the further classifications I have made. "Ethical appeal", I have split into "voluntaristic" and "compulsive." They seek to sort apart two points of view : *one*, where the contention is that our whole effort should be to let people become voluntarily conscious of their rights and responsibilities ; the *other*, where it is felt that some form of social pressure, social compulsion, should be used. We all know of Rousseau's famous exhortation of "forcing men



to become free". It is not necessary to go into the details of this distinction.

Even *efficiency* will have to be thought of in terms of two societies : agrarian society and industrial society. In the agrarian society socialist thought will be deeply coloured by the peasant background and by the mores and urges of the peasant. It is one of the tragedies of the socialist movement that it was developed, in the early stages almost exclusively in countries which were predominantly industrial. The majority of pre-Marxians and the post-Marxians overwhelmingly drew their conclusions from an industrialised social *milieu*. The countries that were before them were Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium and Holland and these were the countries that were industrialised. The next big country, not yet sufficiently industrialised, that was drawn within the orbit of socialist thought and movement was Russia. In Russia, because of a peculiar concatenation of circumstances the peasant problem did not protrude itself as aggressively as it would have done in other countries of East Europe, where the peasant problem, in fact, defied the socialists and the communists alike, for a generation more. After the World War II, only with the help of the Russian armed forces were the communists able to come to power in South-East European countries. It is in China that the question has been squarely posed and the significance of Mao Tse-tung lies in the fact that he, for the first time, made *the peasant the carrier of socialism*. Will the peasant be allowed in that great and ancient land to shape the contours of socialism, in the light of his experience and ideals ? In India and in other countries of Asia it will be necessary to ponder deeply over the relevance and significance of the peasant to the socialist movement. And that is why we shall have to rethink much of the socialist thought that has come to us from the West European countries.

An agricultural society has its characteristic behaviour-pattern. It has not only a slow *tempo* of life, but its predilection is in favour of rest, poise and contemplation. I do not know if you have thought about the basic difference between the U.S.A. and our country. In the U.S.A. the people are perpetually in motion. Movement is the very core of their life. To sit, to ponder, to contemplate, to look *inward*, these things are not their *metier*. The sense of poise is almost unknown to them. For 5,000 years our ancestors have developed a profound awareness of that poise. I have often told Americans that if the Indians have anything to contribute, it is

ability to live *simultaneously* in the stream of time and on the terrain of eternity ! We have a certain detachment ; we are not afraid, we are not ashamed, of *growing old*. Your mother, who may be of forty or forty-five years of age, will tell you that she is getting old. There is no effort on her part to cling on to youth that is slipping. While in the West even a sixty-year-old woman hankers and strives to pass off as a young person. There life begins at forty ! The whole effort is to refuse to recognise the flow of time, nay, to reverse it.

Industrial civilization is essentially non-contemplative and it is primarily mobile. The machines keep for ever whirling. Only yesterday, a friend was saying that on a silk loom, the thread has to undergo three lakhs of motions every minute. Movement is the very heart of industrial civilization and that determines its *tempo* and characterises the culture it evolves. You cannot have the leisurely way of bucolic life in a city or a factory. If you move in a village gait down the Hornby Road, you know where you will land up ! There is a certain compulsion, a definite discipline of the industrial society and that determines the patterns of behaviour and gives shape to the culture of industrial society.

As socialists, we have to decide whether we want to abandon what 5,000 years of efforts have achieved for us. Would you like to become just machine-minded, perpetually in motion, perpetually upto something that you know not what ? For instance, this whole problem of a higher standard of life—higher, higher, higher—till where ? Till everyone has a motor car ? When everyone has a motor car, then quarrel over the brand ? It goes on . . . There has got to be a stage where man must think in terms of poise, wantlessness, contemplation, inwardness,—which are essentially agrarian characteristics.

When you go round and look about, you will find men and women confronting you with these questions. As good socialists wedded to democracy, that is, to discussion as a mode of clarification and understanding, you cannot shirk them. My answer is : In the ultimate amalgam of Indian socialism that we are going to create, there will be room for poise, for contemplation. The agrarian aspect of our civilization and the industrial aspect of modern life have got to be dovetailed, brought together, reconciled. That is our ultimate, in a sense our unique, responsibility.



Industrial civilization inheres *the tendency* to create a *mass man*. I am reminded of the remarkable play of Ernest Toller, bearing, in its English translation, the title of *Masses and Man*. In the original German it was called the *Massen Man*, which I feel, is a profounder title. In Bombay City, for instance, each one of us is apt to be submerged in the anonymous mass. You are a textile worker, a member of the Mill Mazdoor Sabha, a member of the Socialist Party, a student studying in, say, the Siddharth College. You have always some label. You are ever an anonymous part of a well or an ill-defined group. Your personality and individuality have to be submerged because it would be impossible to carry on work, unless men are thus sorted and pigeon-holed ! Each one of us is unique, but each one of us, for the purpose of economy of work, is labelled and listed. That is the beginning of the *mass man*. In industrial society there is ever an exaltation of work, work, work, work. When we come to the "economics and socialism" we shall hear the refrain, "work, work harder", "Produce or Perish."

Let us return, after these meanderings, to the central theme of our discussion.

### LEADERSHIP

When we discuss leadership we have to recognise two types: *one*, leadership of the "*elite*," that is, the leadership of the specially chosen, trained persons, while the *other* is of groups of men coming together in the normal flow of life. For instance, should the Socialist Party primarily depend upon a leadership that is built up, say, around ten determined persons in a particular locality, three students in a particular college, a dozen militant workers in a factory, dedicated to a great cause; or, should its fabric be broad-based, embracing groups of men working in different villages, different factories, different localities, different *chawls*, in co-operative activities, adult education groups, literacy classes, that is, upon men coming together and sharing the life in these scattered clusters of groups, of men in normal life, sharing a new vision and striving to build a new type of society to the extent they can? You will find that deep-seated differences have existed in the socialist movement on this issue. The Leninist view has always been that the communist movement has to be built around an "*elite*" leadership.

## ATTITUDE TO STATE

Socialists may be broadly divided into two groups—those with a critical attitude and those with a favourable attitude to the state. When we come to “politics of socialism”, I shall get down to the details.

Men like Lassalle, the Fabians and the Social Democrats, by and large, have been among those who have entertained a favourable attitude towards the state. It was Lassalle who said: “If you do not make use of the state, you will encounter it as an obstacle.” How far this view is right and proper is a question to which we shall turn later.

There are others—and I believe their number is larger—who adopt a critical attitude to the state. For instance, the Guild Socialists. They reject the state. They believe that the state is an instrument of oppression, not only here and now, but for all times and under all circumstances. As a matter of fact, *all* socialists aspire to achieve *stateless society*. State, as an instrument of compulsion, must “wither away”. All socialists, from the days of Saint-Simon to those of our times, have believed in, and worked for, the time when the governance of men will yield place to administration of things: where there will be no police, no bureaucracy, no judiciary, no army, where by spontaneous co-operation, by the flow of human goodwill the social life will be kept free from friction. That, of course, is an enchanting dream; but in order to realise the alluring vision what do we do? There are some socialists who say that the state has to be fought stubbornly: as we have to eliminate the capitalists, so have we to eliminate men of the state also. The revolution that has to be brought about has to be a double revolution—a revolution against the capitalists, the economic exploiters, and a revolution against the bureaucrats, the politicians, the exploiters in political life. It is an *anti-political* form of socialism. The Guild Socialists and the Syndicalists are among the outstanding examples of socialist schools with pronounced *anti-political* slant. That is why I have said there are some socialists who take up not only a critical attitude but a consistently critical attitude—critical under all circumstances and in all times.

There are other socialists who are ambivalently critical, who are critical under certain circumstances, favourable when those circumstances change. Their argument is that in capitalist society



the State is a capitalist state and as such it has to be fought, but once the revolution takes place and a workers' state is established it must be given full co-operation. They are critical today, but they will become favourable tomorrow. Their approach is dialectical.

### OBJECTIVES

Let us finally turn our attention to *character*. What is meant by the character of socialism? That is something that is determined by differences in *methods* and differences in *objectives*. Let us take up the objectives first.

There are three possible approaches as far as the objectives are concerned. As some will say: "Let us take a practical view." So others will favour a *utopian* view. Those who say, for instance, that under socialism we have to create a society wherein there will be no army, no police, no rulers, wherein there will be no oppression, where men and women will enjoy the same rights, the same equality, in brief, those who are thrilled by the incandescent final vision of socialism, adhere to the utopian objective.

All movements believe in the golden age. You can divide them into reactionary and progressive movements from the fact that the former have their golden age *in the past*, the latter place their golden age *in the future*. The Hindu Maha Sabha talks about the glorious days, the golden life that our people lived, in the Vedic times of the ancient Aryans. The devout Muslim, likewise, believes that in the days of the early *Khalifate*, the Prophet's immediate disciples had mastered the secret of good and noble life everlasting. The golden age of a caste-conscious Maratha is probably in the days of Shivaji. Each one who wants to build up a reactionary movement puts the golden age behind him. You are tied to the dead hands of the past. A progressive movement too has its utopia—but in the future! Most of us believe that something great, something abiding, something of everlasting satisfaction is going to be achieved. Actually, nothing of everlasting satisfaction can ever be achieved, because it is the ineluctable law of life that new problems, visions, difficulties, must arise. I am a socialist, because I realise that today the Indian people are confronted by *animal* wants—hunger, shelter, a piece of cloth to cover body's nakedness. So long as they are a prey to raw wants they cannot experience the more difficult, the subtler and tragic problems of

life. The anguish of an artist, the problems of a philosopher, the tensions of a lover, the anxieties of an educationist—these are problems which are deeper, profounder... these are human problems. It has been said, for instance, by Sydney Hook, in his *Towards Understanding Karl Marx*, that after we have achieved a socialist society the tensions will cease on the physical plane but they will operate on the psychical plane; from the biological to the psychological and then to the philosophical, that is the way tensions and problems of life evolve! Do not go away with the feeling that in five years, in ten years, all problems will be solved, because, if all problems are solved, life comes to an end; there would be, what the Buddha called *Nirvana*! We have, therefore, got to think in terms of thousands and millions of problems, question marks, tensions, challenges and responses. It should be our endeavour to see that these problems are of a higher order, not those about a piece of cloth or a little shelter, but of the mind, of the spirit, of moral personality.

But human beings, being what they are, want a millennium, *swarg*; at the end of his effort a man looks forward to the *moksha* wherein he dreams that he will have fruitful rest. As an unsophisticated Muslim believes that after death, when he goes to heaven, he will have honey and *hoories*, i.e., all the unfulfilled desires will be fulfilled in heaven; so is there a similar conception of heaven in crude socialist propaganda, but as you are going to be teachers of socialism, I do not think I need dangle such carrots before you!

A full and precise picture of Utopia, however, is not without value. It is good to have a final idea. When an artist wants to fashion something, how does he go about it? He has in his mind's eye the perfect picture, the ideal picture of what he is trying to reproduce with the medium that he is shaping. He struggles. He is pregnant with creation. He has before his mind's eye a clear picture of what he wants to say, he picks, chooses a word, or gives a stroke. Somehow the word or the stroke is not adequate to express the picture that is before his mind's eye. He struggles, and the struggle is guided by his vision. Those of you who have read Plato's *Dialogues* know that there is the ideal picture somewhere that guides our efforts in real life. The Utopia, your picture of socialism, inspires, guides, directs and controls your efforts, provides you with a foot-rule with which you measure your stumbling efforts.



The other two objectives are more in vogue. Students of the *Bible* know what we mean by *apocalyptic*. Apocalypse means that one day there will be a sudden, tremendous, momentous change. In the last war, they had coined a term called the "D-Day," a day on which, after months of intense preparations, the troops were to land in Europe and deliver her from the tyranny of Hitler. Those who have the *apocalyptic* objective feel convinced that a revolution will take place. Their whole efforts are focussed on the revolution and it is through that revolution, the insurrectionary upheaval, that the "sorry scheme of things entire" would be shattered and remoulded "nearer to heart's desire". All efforts are ultimately drawn to that burning knot, which is going to upturn society on the "R-Day".

✓ The third objective is *practical*, where people say, let us achieve what we can, let us do what we can. The British Labour Party is a classic instance of a group of socialists functioning on practical objective. Hugh Dalton, one of the leaders of British Socialism has written a book called *Practical Socialism*. They are not ashamed of their pedestrian objective; they actually flaunt it!

#### METHODS

Then we come to *methods*. Here again, you will find that there are those who believe in *reform*, and those who believe in *crisis and catastrophe*. Marx believed in the latter. He believed that there would be a series of crises, which would lead to wars that would blossom into a social revolution.

There are those who believe that social changes have to be brought about through reforms, whether piecemeal or planned, whether purely administrative or through constructive work. But primarily they believe that attention should be devoted to that end and the method should be that of reform rather than that of catastrophe.

Those who believe in catastrophe are naturally anxious to create conditions wherein there will be a breakdown of the state machinery. As against that those who believe in reform would like to set right something that may have broken down somewhere.

These are two main methodological approaches and I have sought to emphasise their bare outlines, and they suffice to show the basic contrariness of the two approaches.

The differences in the methods sometimes lead to differences in objectives also. "Legislative reform and revolution are not different methods of historic development that can be chosen at pleasure from the counter of history as one chooses hot or cold sausages. They are different factors in the development of class society. They condition and complement one another and at the same time are reciprocally exclusive as are the North and South Poles. In each historic period work for reforms is carried on only in the framework of social reform created by the last revolution . . . . a social transformation and a legislative reform do not differ according to their duration but according to their content." (Rosa Luxemburg, quoted in Kamaladevi: *Socialism and Society*, 14.)

Every socialist should have his clear picture of socialism, in a dynamic, effective way. A party line laid from above is useful up to a point. But a party line which bounds the horizon becomes a prison. I would be the last person to put you in an ideological cage. My responsibility is to draw your attention to the various impulses that have shaped the contours of socialist thought and invite you, after proper study and care, to make the picture for yourself.



*Chart II*

## SOCIALISM—THE BACKGROUND

(The numerals refer to similar numbers in Chart I.)

*Utopianism:*

- Saint-Simon (1760-1825) (7), (11), (14), (15), (17), (21), (32).  
 Charles Fourier (1772-1837) (6), (7), (10), (20), (29), (32).  
 Robert Owen (1771-1858) (6), (7), (11), (17), (20), (27), (32), (33).  
 Louis Blanc (1813-82) (7), (11), (15), (17), (21), (26), (30).  
 Proudhon (1809-65) (6), (8), (10), (12), (19), (20), (22), (29), (32).

*Scientific Socialism:*

- Karl Marx (1818-1883) } (7), (11), (17), (20), (27), (35), (36), (31).  
 F. Engels (1820-1895) }

*German Social Democracy:*

- Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64) (7), (11), (15), (17), (21), (26).  
 Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826-1900) } (7), (20), (26), (31).  
 August Bebel (1840-1913) }  
 Von Vollmar (10), (21), (26), (33).  
 Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932) (6), (16), (21), (26), (28), (30), (33).  
 Karl Kautsky (1854-1938) (26), (34).  
 Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1918) (14), (17), (19), (20), (35).

*Fabian Socialism:*

- G. Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) (7), (11), (16), (18), (21), (26), (28), (30), (33).  
 Webbs (1859-1947), (1858-1943) (7), (11), (16), (21), (26), (28), (30), (33), (34).

*Syndicalism:*

- George Sorel (1847-1922) (17), (18), (20), (22), (36), (31).  
 Guild Socialism: (19), (20), (22), (26), (28), (33).

*Totalitarian Communism:*

- Lenin (1870-1924) (7), (17), (18), (23), (36), (31).  
 Trotsky (1877-1940) (7), (11), (17), (18), (23), (36), (31).  
 Stalin (1879-1953) (7), (11), (14), (15), (17), (18), (23), (36), (31), (34).

## Lecture II

### SOCIALISM : THE BACKGROUND

Yesterday we made an effort to survey the extensive field of socialist thought and socialist endeavour and tried to set up certain landmarks to guide our path and to light up our understanding. It will be our duty today to look at the history of socialist thought with the help of the Chart that we have drawn up. The worthwhileness of Chart I depends upon the aid it provides in understanding the various phases of the development of socialist thought and the socialist movement. Going through the Chart again this morning, I felt that there is one serious lacuna, and I would like to take this opportunity to remove it. Let me assure you that the Chart is tentatively drawn. In the light of our discussions, it may have to be further modified. Anyway, I would like you to turn to Point 27, that is, under Character (5), Method (24); in the Chart it is put down as "Catastrophe". I would prefer to substitute for it the word "Crisis" and break it up into two sub-sections: *one*, "*Combative*" and *two*, "*Catastrophic*". The significance of this distinction will become clear as we develop the theme of our talk this evening.

#### THE GREAT DIVIDE

Most students of socialism are familiar with the divisions that are made in socialist thought. Like the girdle of Equator, this division runs through the entire body of socialist thought. Traditionally speaking, the orange of socialism is cut into two by this dividing line which is provided by the profound and penetrating teachings of Karl Marx. All those who preceded Marx are called the *utopians*, visionaries, men who were inspired by noble ideals but whose philosophy, and ideologies, whose plans of action, were not drawn up in relation to, in-conformity with, the realities, the stubborn social facts. It is argued that before Marx, for two reasons, it was not possible even for the ablest and the acutest of thinkers to go beyond the Utopian stage.

*Firstly*, economic development had not proceeded far enough. Every student of economic history knows that the Industrial Re-



volution began to sweep through Great Britain from 1760, and its full effects were felt only by 1830 or 1840. In the annals of Europe, 1848 is more than a landmark; it forms the water-shed that divides one phase of history from another. In 1848 there broke out a series of revolutions in European countries that showed a new character, that heralded the dawn of a new era. The subservience of the proletariat to the *bourgeoisie*, that had existed before, ended and the proletariat emerged as an independent actor on the stage of history, arrayed against his erstwhile principal.

*Secondly*, it was in 1848 that Karl Marx burst upon the world with his immortal little book, *The Communist Manifesto*. The publication of the *Manifesto* marks, according to a section of thinkers, the first occasion when history becomes conscious of itself, or when man becomes aware of the profound forces and impulses that shape his destiny. Before that, neither the economic situation had developed to an extent where it would be possible for people to think in terms of a new philosophy, to think in terms of a new social order, except as a sudden vision, a radiant dream, nor had any able thinker appeared who had fabricated the intellectual tools needed to make men not only understand the reality, but also master the laws of its change—that means, not merely interpret the world but possess the wherewithals to *change* it. Marx brought evolutionary insight to socialist thought and socialist movement.

Socialists before Marx had stressed moral example and new harmony as the road to a better world. Marx substituted the laws of historical development in the place of moral suasion. He uncovered the laws of motion that determine economic progress and showed how the productive forces must outgrow the prevailing property relations, how there must be growing "socialisation" of production. This socialisation of production must result in polarising the society into a few owners and many workers, where the workers, under the discipline of industrial economy and the awareness brought to them by socialist philosophy would be in a position to play a positive, determining role in social transformation. Marxian thought brought to the aid of unconscious changes conscious awareness and strength. As Marx put it, "Philosophy is the guiding impulse of this emancipation (of mankind), its life-blood is the proletariat."

Philosophy became effective because economic developments were providing, through increased production, the wherewithals of fuller life and just distribution.

Traditionally, socialist thought gets divided into the *utopian* phase and the *scientific* phase. It is generally agreed, as Engels pointed out, that the great Utopians (*i.e.*, Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, and Robert Owen) were men gifted with rare intellectual powers, with unusual understanding, noble vision, that they had the glimmerings of the problems and the solutions that were to come, but these were the guess-works of a genius. The conclusions that they came to were not logically derived.

This may all be true. But from it, it is further suggested, albeit indirectly, that this guess-work of a genius, this glimmering of new life, new problems and new solutions, came to an end with the emergence of Karl Marx into the domain of human thought. It is argued that Utopianism came to an end, or at least the part of Utopianism which is worth our consideration comes to an end, with Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen. Now it will be my endeavour to contest this theory because I believe it has done considerable harm to a real and an adequate understanding of socialism. It is in the interest of progress that the line of men who examined society with lanterns lit from the lamp of tomorrow who are able to discover new segments of the vast continent of socialism, should not come to an end with the early Utopians.

### THE FORERUNNERS

Before I contest, if not the assertion, at least the inference that is implicit in the statement of Engels, I would like to review, very briefly, the early Utopians. (I presume that you have before you Chart II. The various numericals that are given there refer to the numbers in Chart I.)

Let us look at Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier. You will notice that they were more or less contemporaries. Saint-Simon was born in 1760 when the industrial revolution made its bow on the stage of history. He died in 1825, that is, by the time the industrial revolution was reaching the *crescendo* of its development in England. He was thus fashioned by the forces of the industrial revolution. If it can be said of any one, it can be said of him, that he was the "child cradled by the Industrial Revolution".



Charles Fourier was twelve years younger to Saint-Simon and died, strangely enough, just twelve years after his death. He was also a child of the industrial revolution, yet his reactions were very different from those of Saint-Simon.

Saint-Simon was the first to recognise the significance of industrial civilization and he greeted the new century as a century of *organisation*. As pointed out in the Chart, he was the first man to think in terms of *efficiency*; he railed against inefficiency, against the traditional leisurely behaviour-patterns of agricultural life. His bitterest scorn was reserved for the lazy—*les oisifs*. He was the first to realise that science must be wedded to economy to give birth to a new society; if the goblins of poverty, want, misery, squalor, disease that haunt the margins of man's life are to be exorcised, it is necessary to bring about a marriage between modern science and economy. Likewise, he looked at the problems of human society from the point of view of science. He has been aptly called the father of the Science of Society, now known as Sociology.

One of the first persons to discover the importance of work, in the sense discussed by us yesterday, was Saint-Simon. He thought very poorly of politics; not of politicians alone, but of all those like the clergy, noblemen, who were not connected with the actual work of production, he had no opinion; engineers, bankers, these were the men whom he esteemed highly. In a way, it might be said that Saint-Simon was the first of the Technocrats, the philosopher of *savants* and *flambeaux*. He believed that the society of tomorrow can be worthy of itself, that the promise that is inherent in it can be realised, only if the new managerial class that was emerging gets opportunity to control the administration as well as the economy. He had, therefore, no use for politics and politicians, and he was the first to say that the time will come when administration of things—*regime administratif*—will take the place of governance of men—*regime gouvernemental*. He was critical of the State, contemptuous of politicians, and he put, above all, his faith in science, in engineering. There is nothing surprising in the fact that one of his disciples was responsible for the cutting of the Suez Canal and another of his disciples undertook the organisation of one of the biggest railway systems in France. He was able to influence a whole generation.

Though Saint-Simon rhapsodised over the role of the *entrepreneur*, he also gave out two arresting ideas: the *first* was about

the need for property rights to vary with public opinion and social convenience; the *second* was his bold statement that "men should organise their society in the manner most advantageous to the largest number; they should propose, as the end to be aimed at in all their works and in all their actions, to ameliorate as promptly and as completely as possible, the moral and physical existence of the most numerous class". *La class la plus nombreuse* makes its *debut*, Saint-Simon ushers it from wings to the stage!

Saint-Simon was thus the most eloquent prophet of the rising *bourgeoisie* in their most generous and idealistic mood.

### PROPHET OF LITTLE MAN

But when we turn to Charles Fourier, what do we find? If Saint-Simon was the advocate, the bard, of the rising industrialist, if he was able to dramatise and make resplendent the role of an engineer or a banker, Fourier represented the moods, depressions and exultations, of the uprooted, frustrated middle-class man. We are today living through a phase of the Industrial Revolution. New industries are coming up. Capital is being accumulated. In the process some shop-keepers inevitably lose their business; others get thrown out of their jobs. Elsewhere some agriculturists are being ejected from their lands. Everywhere, the traditional economy is breaking down, and with its break-down vast chunks of humanity get uprooted. This process of uprooting of humanity has always accompanied the industrial revolution—*i.e.*, the transition of a predominantly agrarian society into an industrial society. This uprooting naturally hurts, harms, irritates, large sections of the people, especially those who are directly affected. Fourier represented the moods, the perceptions, the inchoate aspirations of these ruined men—he reflected the bitterness of the *petite* against the *grand bourgeoisie*. While Saint-Simon was conscious of the inefficiency of production, Fourier was bothered about mal-distribution, about the injustices of economic life.

Only this afternoon a gentleman walked into my office; he turned out to be an engineer who has spent the last 28 years in the USA. He had left India by the same ship by which Jayaprakash had sailed for the USA for higher studies. My visitor had stayed on in the USA, had qualified as an engineer and had ultimately risen to be a teacher in a branch of Engineering at the Chicago University. Well, he came and talked and he railed against the





chronic inefficiency in India. How ten men are engaged in doing what one man can do.... So much labour is being wasted..... So much time is being wasted..... The American mind, trained as it is in modern technique, the final product of the industrial civilization, is sorely bothered by inefficiency. Ill-organised production stinks in the nostrils!

But a man who is uprooted, a person who has lost his job, derives little solace from this controversy about efficiency *versus* inefficiency. You cannot enthuse him by telling him that the capitalist is going to industrialise India, that the Government are trying to build a new country. His lament will be that no one cares for the woes of the Little Man. Generally, you will find a ruined man becoming indignant about social inequity, and that is the characteristic note of Fourier; in him the ethical element is dominant. He saw the corrupting fingers of Capitalism soiling everything around him: civilization had been ravished; all social institutions, from commerce to marriage were vulgarised.

Yesterday, I explained to you how inefficiency rankles in boom periods and how injustice rankles when there is a depression. You might add today that inefficiency becomes significant to those who see an expanding future before them, injustice becomes significant to those who see a darkening future before them. A competent socialist should be able to play on both these strings of his instrument. The tragedy is that most socialist propagandists have just *ek-tar*. I am anxious that you should not be like them; there are a variety of strings to this great instrument, capable of producing colourful symphonies, and you should not prefer just one and neglect the rest.

### THE NEW HARMONY

Fourier's concept of inefficiency is very different from that of Saint-Simon's. Saint-Simon's indignation about inefficiency is in production about workmanship, in the use of resources at one's disposal; while Fourier's awareness of inefficiency is from the point of view of the sufferers, the disinherited and the deracinated. Saint-Simon's approach to efficiency is that of an *entrepreneur*, the rising *bourgeoisie*, the new organiser of economy, the engineer, the banker, the big industrialist . . . Fourier's approach to efficiency is that of a peasant, a teacher, a clerk, a small trader. So, you must realise that even though

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I use one word, "efficiency", it has varied layers of meaning, and different facets have to be kept before the mind all the time.

Fourier's general approach was in the direction of a composite conception of production-cum-distribution. Here he has made some interesting contributions, the most significant being his plan for *phalanstere*. It was to be a sort of a students' hostel or better still a modern hotel,—a hotel wherein you get everything you need. His *phalanstere* is something like the Taj Mahal Hotel, self-contained, but with this difference: that while at the Taj a set of men do the work and another set of men enjoy the services; in the vision of Fourier the same people would be working and enjoying. For instance, if 1,500 men stay in such a place, a few hundred would work on the farm and produce food-grains and grow vegetables, others would work on looms and produce cloth, and so on.... The entire activity, the complex activities of the life of a community, would be carried on by the people, the *phalange*, in a *co-operative* manner, and in order that there should be no monotony the work would be changed from time to time. His main emphasis was on making attraction, as against restraint, the fulcrum of work. His Law of Attraction he based upon three passions in man: *la papillonne*, the passion for variety and change, *la cabaliste*, the passion for intrigue and emulation, and *la composite*, the passion for associative work. Only by harassing these elemental passions can attraction be made the basis of production. This substitution would not only augment production many-fold but put distribution on a just basis.

He further advocated that men should be free, in response to the *papillonne* passion, to do whatever they like—one day work in the garden, the next day sit at the loom, the third day cook in the kitchen, and so on. There is nothing fantastic about it. If you read Lenin's *State and Revolution*, this exactly is the ultimate picture of society that he offers—*where every cook has learnt to rule!* The ultimate picture of Marx and Lenin envisions men and women as capable of doing all kinds of work—you may be a Raphael in the morning, wielding your magic brush, in the evening you become a Bach or a Beethoven weaving divine symphonies, and the next day you would be sitting in the Secretariat attending to administration work. They believed that it is possible for human beings, when socialist society is



fully realised, to do a variety of things, to be master of all and slave of none. As a matter of fact, some of the most moving passages in the *Capital*, the *magnum opus* of Karl Marx, are devoted to an indictment of the enslavement, the degradation, of man that is brought about by machinofacture in the capitalist society. Marx denounced capitalism because he felt that it reduced human beings to automata—man, the master of creation, was degraded to the position of a mere cog-wheel in the mechanism of production.

To come back to Fourier, his picture was essentially an agrarian one; while Saint-Simon put the over-tone of industrial development, Fourier, who was junior to him, who also experienced the changes that were brought about by the Industrial Revolution, remained anti-industrial, continued to be agrarian-minded.

#### MAN AND HIS MILIEU

Next we come to Robert Owen. There are three facts about him, that need to be noted. He developed two of the most creative and abiding organisations that have emerged in our time—I call them the two wheels on which the chariot of social progress moves. What are these two organisations?—The trade unions and the consumers' co-operatives. Robert Owen organised some of the earliest trade unions in Great Britain and inspired the earliest co-operatives. In the combative organisations, such as the trade unions, men and women come together and fight for their rights; while the co-operatives are constructive organisations *par excellence*, they are the schools of associative work. Both these were either conceived or developed by Robert Owen. If for nothing else, for having given us the picture of these two types of organisations, for having developed them and nurtured them for twenty years, he earns an abiding place in the socialist pantheon.

He, however, did something more, and that was the development, or at least the enunciation, of what he called the *milieu theory*. Every human being has a certain social back-ground. All of you probably know the story of the famous experiment that Akbar Badshah had carried out. It is one of those stories, which might be fictitious, but which are the raw materials of man's wisdom. It is said that one day, as Akbar was puzzled about

the true religion of man, he said: "Suppose I get hold of about a dozen babies and lock them up from their birth and deprive them of all human contact; when they are twelve years of age, whatever religion they are found to believe in would prove to be the authentic, the original, the pure religion of men." Straight-away, he got a score of new-born babies and locked them up in a palace, and isolated them from all human contact. After twelve years Akbar Badshah went to them eager to hear the quintessence of philosophy from the lips of the most uncontaminated of human beings. What did he find? That these children neither understood speech, nor could they speak! After all, speech is the product of association. All that you do, you are able to do because the accumulated achievements of Man in the last 10,000 or 20,000 years are passed on to you by your parent, your friends, your teachers, by the society around you. It takes centuries, as Stalin belatedly discovered, to develop a language. It is a fabric whose threads spread over countless generations. Yet, you learn the language in a few months or years; a social achievement is handed over to you, almost on a platter! Man, therefore, is greatly conditioned by his social circumstances and surroundings. That a man cannot be conceived of independently of his social background, of his social *milieu*, was a fact that was profoundly underscored by Robert Owen. Nay, more than that. The environments can make or mar the people. "Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened," he wrote at the mast-head of his journal, *The New Moral World*, "may be given to any community, even the world at large, by the application of proper means which are to a great extent at the command and under the control of those who have influence over the affairs of men. "The recognition of influence of environment on man, demonstrated by Owen, has contributed a new pillar to the structure of socialist thought.

No apter tribute can be paid to Robert Owen than in the words of Prof. Cole: "The great British utopian, Robert Owen—that astonishing person to whom so many of the movements of the nineteenth century can be traced back. Owen has been called the founder of British Socialism and of British Co-operation. He shares with the elder Sir Robert Peel the credit of having started the movement for factory reform. He holds an assured place in the history of educational experiment. He



was the founder of the 'Rationalist' movement, and occupies an important position in the chain of ethical and secularist activities. And with all these he combined the not easily reconcilable roles of a great, self-made employer and of an outstanding leader and inspirer of the Trade Union movement." (G.D.H. Cole: *Socialist Thought*, i. 86).

### RIGHT TO WORK

Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen were born in the 18th century and lived for some period in the 19th century. Louis Blanc was born and died in the 19th century—a product of disenchantment with the French Revolution. The most important facts about him are: (1) He was the first to come out with the demand of, the first to enunciate, the *droit au travail*. Socialists who today get up and denounce the Indian Constitution because it does not guarantee the right to work rarely know that the first man to demand this right, to insist that this should be the key-stone of the arch of fundamental rights, was Louis Blanc. As I told you, the more you move towards an industrial civilization, the more attached you get to this concept of "work"! (2) He came forward with the suggestion of *people's workshops*. He asked, why should the workers not come together and set up their own workshop, *ateliers nationaux*? This was in 1848, which was a revolutionary period: there were both confidence, hope, assertion, a mood of achievement as also dislocation, disturbance.... So, he went to the workers and said: "Look here, why should you remain unemployed? Why should you look on passively, almost helplessly, at the capitalists? Why can't you set up your own workshops?" Naturally, the workers said, "Where do we get the capital?" He said, "That is simple. The state should provide you the capital." *The state as the banker of the poor* was the discovery of Blanc.

When Blanc said that state should provide capital, obviously he had a favourable attitude to the state. Fourier and Robert Owen were generally hostile to the state, their emphasis was on co-operative efforts, on community building, not political endeavour, while Saint-Simon was avowedly hostile to politics and politicians but not averse to making use of the state. But Louis Blanc was the first to observe that "socialism can be fructified only by the breath of politics." He is the bridge that connects the pre-Marxian Utopians with the post-Marxian Socialists.

The stream of utopian thought does not dry up with Blanc. I have referred in Chart II to another person, Proudhon—a contemporary, or almost a predecessor, of Marx; after him too, a number of utopians have emerged. The utopians are men who are gifted with long vision, who see far, who have an intuitive grasp of the pressing problems and their solutions. You might call them the “poets of socialism.” Every philosophy of action has its poets, its historians, its scientists, its soldiers. Islam, Buddhism, Marxism, all these explosive, dynamic philosophies, become potent forces, make and remake humanity, only because they have their poets, historians, soldiers and engineers. So, if socialism is to remain a potent force, though soldiers sneer and engineers smile, those who realise the protean character of socialism, who see in socialism a mighty river that is going to change the traditional banks of life, and create a new social topography, must welcome the poets of the movement! Do you think that this poetic vision, this intuitive conception of the problems and solutions of social life, came to an end with Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen?

The utopians have been continuously emerging and those of you who are interested in knowing about the utopians right down to our times will do well to read a profound, penetrating and moving book recently published by Professor Martin Buber, one of the foremost Jewish thinkers, and a doyen of those practical dreamers who are opening up a flowering vista in the wilderness that was Palestine. This book is *Paths in Utopia*.

Now we move on scientific socialism; to Karl Marx and Engels: You are all familiar with them: efficiency, industry, collective approach, etc., etc. I shall be dealing with their ideas in great detail in my future talks.

#### IDEAS GO TO PEOPLE

I would like to move on to German Social Democracy. We come to Ferdinand Lassalle. Here again, what a colourful personality, what a “beloved rascal”: He had more than his share of defects in him; but still, the man could exercise a spell, arrest attention by a phrase or an act, for he had great qualities too. Lassalle—he died in the prime of his youth—was the creator of the broad, popular, German workers’ movement.



Lassalle had hardly an original idea in his head. But he was a brilliant *broker*—a political broker of other people's ideas! And he had a genius for coining phrases. Rodbertus' theory of decreasing wages being inherent in a society built upon private property was appropriated by Lassalle and decked out under the ringing name of "the iron law of wages." Under private property economy wages tend towards the subsistence level. This tendency can be reversed only by using the power of the state against the rent-drawers, coupon-clippers, capitalists and landlords. He therefore attacked the Night Watchman conception of the state dear to the Manchester men. He demanded a positive approach: "It is the duty and purpose of the state to facilitate and effect the great advances of mankind in civilization. This is its calling, for this it exists." He urged the working class to make use of the state by constituting themselves into an independent party and by striving to get the reins of government in their hands.

Not only he built up such a party, but gave it an attractive workers' programme.

There is something further to which attention should be drawn. At that time a conflict, rather, a competition, was on, between those who believed that an effective working class movement could develop only on the foundation of co-operatives, and Lassalle who believed that an effective working-class organisation can develop only on the foundation of political consciousness. He won the working-class allegiance for the political expression, as against the purely constructive approach. And to political activities he gave a new edge; his theory, proclaiming that "*Verfassungsfragen sind Machtfragen*" (constitutional problems are problems of power), inevitably took politics from the gilded chambers of law-making to fields, factories and the market-place.

#### A FORGOTTEN SOCIALIST

After Lassalle's death, the organisation that he had set up was brought under the control of the next two leaders who are listed with their characteristics, in Chart II—Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel. There is little of importance to say about them, except that under them the working-class movement as developed by Lassalle, shed most of its Lassallean attributes and took on more and more of Marxian characteristics.

There is, however, one person who deserves attention but who rarely gets it. As a matter of fact, I "discovered" *Von Vollmar* when I went through a book on *German Social Democracy* written by Bertrand Russell as early as 1895. Going through that book, as also through Dawson's *Lassalle and German Social Democracy*, I came across this very interesting figure, Vollmar. It was Vollmar who pointed out the complete ignoring of the *peasant* by the German Social Democratic Party. At that time, socialists equated socialism with nationalisation—and that too mostly of industries. It was Vollmar who pointed out that "this attitude will not work . . . . What about the peasants? They want their lands." It was Bavarian Vollmar who confronted Prussian Social Democracy with the claims of the peasant, of regionalism, and of transigence. A commission was appointed to go into the peasant question, a commission of which August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were among the members; a valuable report was produced—and shelved! It was in connection with this controversy that Vollmar pointed out that it was necessary to revise some of the basic ideas of Marx,—the work that was later on done by Bernstein.

#### REVISIONISM

If you compare the items I have listed against Karl Marx and those that are listed against Bernstein, you will find that almost on every point he differed from the Master and inclined towards a practical approach: peaceful solution of problems; he was favourably inclined to the state; he primarily believed in administrative reforms; his approach, for instance, was ethical. Revolution from being the means was now viewed as the end of the social process. This logic led Bernstein to make the memorable remark, "What is generally taken as the goal of socialism is nothing to me, the movement is everything." The day-to-day reforms, the step by step progress, alone have real significance, the apocalyptic vision of revolution is just moonshine!

Bernstein next revised the economics of Marx. These revisions led to corresponding revisions in political analysis and adjustments in the tactics of the Labour Movement.

The "revision" left little of the characteristic core of Marxism; socialism, after Bernstein had finished, emerged as an heir and a fulfilment of liberalism. The majestic structure of Marx is transformed into a humble tenement of ideas whose resemblance



is closer to Mill than to Marx. As Bernstein pithily put it, "Abandon cant, return to Kant."

His reformist, liberal approach was the polar opposite of all those who believed in catastrophic change, who followed on apocalyptic vision. If you have Trotsky at one end of the *socialist spectrum*, Bernstein is at the other end. In between the two, all the other colours are beautifully mixed up. It should be your effort to sort them out, and discover the different tones and shades that have gone into the creation of the spectrum.

It was Karl Kautsky, the high priest of orthodox Marxism, who tried to answer Bernstein's criticism in two ways: *firstly*, he said that Bernstein was labouring the obvious, "he is trying to burst open *open doors*"! *secondly*, he softened Bernstein's attack by saying that "Marx correctly foresaw the *direction* in which the events were moving, but he misjudged the *rate* at which they were moving." Rather a lame counter-reformation!

#### DEGENERATION

How did the militant ideas of Marx reach such a sedate maturity?

Marx's prognosis hinges round the crisis. Marx believed that the socialist movement would have to develop from one economic crisis to another, from a political crisis to another, and that these crises would enable the workers to mobilise themselves, the sufferings that people would undergo, would lead to profound psychological and organisational preparedness which would enable the workers ultimately *to storm their way to victory*. The catastrophic moment comes when the socialist "chicken" is ready inside the almost shattered shell of capitalism; that will be the moment of the great transformation when, in his famous words, "the expropriators will themselves be expropriated"! This vision of society, developing, evolving, social forces growing, maturing through a series of crises and ultimately coming to their simmering climax and then through a catastrophe, an upheaval, leaping forward to a new social order—that was the picture of Marx.

At the other end, we come by the turn of the century to Bernstein, and to the Fabians, all very gentlemanly, all dressed in top-hats, frock coats, striped trousers, grey hair, very respectable, old, moderate, modest.... Why did this big transformation come about? Partly because, most of the protagonists had grown old! But

mainly because, during this period, economic developments ushered in an era of prosperity. Whether in England or in France, in Germany or in the USA, these were the years of expanding economy. And with the development of the economy, the revolutionary crisis receded. The trouble with Karl Marx, as with most Marxists, was that he had, what one might call, *a highly powerful telescopic faculty*. He had firmly believed that the crisis was round the corner. Events, however, put off most of the changes, crises, catastrophes, prophesied by Marx. Because he had set a certain time-table and it went wrong completely, his followers came forward and said, "Let's revise it, that is, reconsider his ideas!" (When Gandhiji's time-table went wrong—and he was another "victim" of the telescopic faculty—and his promise of achieving Swaraj in one year failed to materialise, his followers, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel, said it was time to change the old man's theories, and the "no-changers" became "pro-changers"!)

A visionary, an impatient reformer, thinks that humanity will march at *his* speed; that men of common clay have the same passions, the same urgency, that a Gandhi or a Marx has, is a grand error of history. You and I have not the urgency that these men, who have shaken the world, feel. Buddha said, "I shall not have *Nirvana* so long as one single being remains in the world to be saved." That passion, that all-enveloping love for the living, is something that we do not feel, that we are even unable to understand. But it is there; it exists, is a proven fact and *that* is the pinnacle of human achievement!

These men of vision believe that others are going to respond to *their* sense of urgency, and it is there that their calculations go wrong. When their calculations go wrong, their followers come forward and revise their theories! Only, one set comes forward to do it openly; the other set, though it revises the theories, tries to cover up the revision in the name, and under the prestige, of the Master—they become authors of covert revision.

#### FABIANS

So, during the period of prosperity, when the time-table of Karl Marx had gone wrong, Social Democrats in Germany started revising him. Similarly, Social Democrats in England, the Fabians, (the word *Fabian* comes from a Roman general,



Fabius Cuncatator, who was known for his slowly maturing strategy) developed new theories and new tactics. The Fabian tortoise believes that by its slow yet persistent movement it would win against the Marxist hare !

How did the Fabians succeed in creating, what Bernard Shaw has called, "a Fabian boom"? Because, they tried to reinterpret socialist ideas in terms that were consonant with the developments that had come over England after 1870. They concluded that a democratic state which was prepared to embark on social reform, a working class well-organised and politically informed, a nation with a growing social consciousness, cannot be treated from the standpoint of revolution and class struggle. A new adaptation was therefore called for.

The first step in such an adaptation was concentration on facts and details and abjuring of romantic revolution. As Shaw pithily put it, socialism needs light, not heat. It is the abiding glory of Fabianism that it carried seekers of socialism to dull facts and dingy realities. Even a man like Tawney began his apprenticeship by calculating the *Minimum Rates in the Tailoring Trade* and in the *Chain-making Industry*.

The Fabian view was greatly influenced by Comte, Darwin and Spencer. The outlook was evolutionary, the social process was believed to be leading inexorably to "changed conditions of material production which *ipso facto* effect a revolution in our life" (*Fabian Essays in Socialism*, 58). The changes are almost impersonal and the utmost one can do is to "turn the instinct into self-conscious reason." And that was what the Fabians set out to do.

The method was piecemeal reform : step by step, and slice by slice. The attitude was wholly friendly to the state with the proviso that the Westminster and the Whitehall do not exhaust the agencies of the state. "It is our municipalities," wrote Sidney Webb, "which have done so much to 'socialise' our industrial life." Shaw was even more explicit: "A democratic state cannot be a Social Democratic State unless it has in every centre of the population a local governing body as thoroughly democratic in its constitution as the central parliament" (*Fabian Essays in Socialism*, 47). Beatrice Webb had traced the growth of the consumers' co-operatives and after her marriage with Sidney, the fecund pair had brought out a masterly *History of*

*Trade Unionism.* They had thus discovered and mapped out a whole new continent of democracy.

The classic Fabian *tactics* were of *permeation*; the permeation of Tories and Liberals, of local bodies and civil servants. The policy of permeation envisaged the acceptance of a reform that took the nation nearer to the goal of socialism, even by persons opposed to that goal. It was hoped that in the process of development the unconvinced would get converted.

With the principle of permeation was associated the belief in the inevitability of gradualness. Social transformation was inevitable but also gradual. The Webbs, for instance, had no sympathy with impatient persons, revolution was pure romanticism. Social changes need exact study, devoted industry and education of public opinion—and these pre-conditions impose upon all changes the inevitability of gradualness.

The Fabians, the German Social Democrats, and a number of others, like Jean Jaures, the French socialist leader, thus, revised Marx in terms of a non-catastrophic, practical, "gas and water" approach in almost every country of Europe.

#### COUNTER OFFENSIVE

When such a stream of thought develops and moves towards one extreme, it inevitably provokes a counter stream of thought. Pro-state, devotion to administrative work, piecemeal reforms, concentration on municipal gas work, municipal water supply, running of a co-operative or the organisation of a trade union.... not a very inspiring programme! Rather dull, monotonous, colourless! What happens to a generation of young people who are offered this as a staple of socialism? They swing, in their search for a colourful purpose to inspire their life and enliven their efforts, to the other extreme. The staid revisionists "gave birth" to the bohemian revolutionaries. And that brings us to *Syndicalism* and *Guild Socialism*.

Syndicalism is violently anti-state. It believes that state is as obnoxious as capitalism. Secondly, it is opposed to political parties. The Syndicalists say that a political party is a mongrel thing because in a political party all types of persons come together and their unity is merely the tenuous unity of thought, of ideology!



But a trade union is a class organisation and as such it represents and fosters fundamental solidarity.

The Syndicalists believed that the state would be an oppressive instrument. You will find that their thought was greatly influenced by utopian writers particularly Proudhon. As a matter of fact, if one were to attempt a comprehensive review of socialist thought, one would have to touch almost every aspect of contemporary life and thought. I am, therefore, anxious that you should look at socialism as a profound intellectual quest. The more you go into it, the more you will find the quest widening. Socialism is probably the most elaborate, the most exquisite pattern that is being woven into the fabric of life that is still on the loom of time. The fabric grows, the pattern evolves. It is your duty to discover the thousands of threads that give it links with and lineage of different ideas, different experience.

As I was saying, the Syndicalists have been influenced by a variety of thinkers and writers. But we are primarily concerned with the basic contribution of their thinkers. According to them, a political party based upon voluntary association was a tenuous association, while the trade union would be different because it would be built upon an association of necessity where there would be an inner compulsion. This inner compulsion gives the organisation a strength all its own.

Then they said that the revolutionary working class movement—based upon conflict between classes—can be conducted only on the *terrain de class* (on the class level). As against the political level, they projected the class level, and they argued that socialism cannot be achieved by elections, reforms. The practical approach, the “gas and water” approach? No! If socialism is to be achieved, workers must organise in militant class organisations, in trade unions, and place before them only one goal—a *general strike*. It was the Syndicalists who first conceived the idea of a total strike which paralyses the country completely and makes the grip of that paralysis so firm, so far-flung and sweeping, that enemies of the workers throw down arms and cry, “we are defeated”! Take the Kapp *putsch*, for instance. A reactionary military general, Kapp, tried to overthrow the republican government of Germany in 1918. That *putsch* was defeated, not by any political party, not by the Social

Democrats, not by the Communists (all political parties were fumbling), but by the German working class *functioning through the trade unions*. The King of Belgium, it can be argued, was recently compelled to abdicate, not so much by the political battle that was waged by the Socialist Party there, but by the effective general strike that was organised by the workers. The Syndicalists were the first to emphasise the dynamic potentiality, the revolutionary effectiveness of general strike. Their vision is essentially catastrophic. There is no piece-meal growth. They feel that the time will come when one fine morning the entire working class, properly organised, militantly inspired, will go on a general strike, the enemies of workers will realise the strength of the workers, feel the impact of the power, the impregnable strength, of the working class, and shall throw down their arms. The enemies, pulverised and defeated, will be scattered to the winds! Then the economy as also the administration would be taken over by the workers themselves. The pack of politicians would be booted out !

#### “ REVISIONISM OF LEFT ”

The theoretical and philosophical foundations of Syndicalism were provided by a group of able intellectuals, led by George Sorel (1847-1922), Hubert Lagardelle and Gustav Harve (1871-1922).

Sorel called syndicalism “revisionism of the left.” It was his function, he claimed, to “purge” Marxism of unessentials and rediscover its core, *la noyau*. It was his passion to “revise Marxism with its own methods.” The class struggle—*la lutte de classe*—is that kernel of Marxism.

Syndicalism, in the hands of Sorel, becomes a philosophy, not of thought but of action, in which the place of pride is accorded to “intuition.” It was Rousseau who had said, “only when you prevent a man from acting will he then think.” Sorel, therefore, emphasised action to prevent the worker from falling a victim to thought that enfeebles !

Action must be spontaneous, not the end product of an enervating process of thinking. Unplanned, unprepared action was the most powerful. What the worker needs to foster is *elan*. Sorel thus gives the movement an anti-rational, anti-intellectual turn. He makes action the sole criterion of truth,



and vindicates the Marxian emphasis on *praxis*. This mystical belief in action, he justified, as being not a retreat from reason, but "principally an effort to lead reason to the embrace of reality." Significantly, in these very words Peguy defines the philosophy of Bergson. By linking *elan vital* with the general strike, Sorel married Marxism to Bergsonism. "No effort of thought, no progress of knowledge, no rational induction will ever dispel the mystery that envelops socialism, and because the philosophy of Marx recognised fully this future of socialism that it acquired the right to serve as the starting-point of socialist enquiry." (Sorel: *Reflections on Violence*, 164.) By an intellectual *tour de force*, as Sidney Hook has pointed out, "Marx is transformed from the theorist of social action to its poet; his rational analyses are transformed into romantic insights; his attempt at explaining the processes of production into an indirect confirmation of the mysteries of creation."

Action means violence. Its glorification was, in a way, a cleansing influence in the foggy atmosphere of not mere parliamentarism, but *Millerandism*. But Sorel swung to the other extreme and apotheosised *unplanned* violence. In his revolutionary strategy, the key role is assigned to "the untrimmed lamp, the ungirt loin"!

In the sharp contrast that Sorel draws between the revolutionary spirit of the working class and its degradation in politics, he was merely reflecting a contemporary tendency of the French thought. Was it not Charles Peguy (1873-1914) who taught, in his *Cahiers*, that the degradation of the *mystique* into *politique* is a general law of the modern industrial society? "All begins in the spirit (*en mystique*) and ends in politics." While surveying the political thought in France, J. P. Mayer concludes, "De Tocqueville, Montalembert, Renan, Peguy and Sorel belong to one spiritual family." Sorel thus imposed the characteristic French thought on the spontaneous urge of the disillusioned French working class.

There was another *anti-democratic* contribution that Sorel made to the intellectual amalgam of syndicalism. That was the role assigned to militant, conscious minority in the maturing of the revolutionary situation. The majority is inert, it is the determined minority that is the leaven of the lump. The will

to power, and not number changes a social order. The proletarian *elites* alone can usher in socialist society.

Syndicalism is thus not only a Nietzschean but a Narcissist expression of socialism.

### GUILD SOCIALISM

The French are somewhat of a tempestuous people. So are the Italians and the Spaniards; the Latin people are ebullient. After all, Don Quixote could emerge only in Spain! These Latin countries, vital, explosive, rather gay, with a lot of *abandon*—they alone could develop the syndicalist theory. The more precise and prosaic Britishers developed Guild Socialist theory. It is also anti-state. Please remember that simultaneously, two streams of socialist thought are developing; one very favourable to the state—Louis Blanc, Lassalle, Vollmar, Bernstein, Bernard Shaw, Webbs, Jean Jaures, Turati and a whole lot of them; side by side, there is a young, tempestuous brook—Syndicalism and Guild Socialism: violent men, ardent people and very confident.

The Guild Socialists thought that society, or at least the economy, should be organised on the basis of "guilds." In medieval Europe there used to be "guilds"; they used to be, I believe, in our country too. The goldsmiths had a guild and so had other trades. The guilds were self-regulating, autonomous bodies of producers or merchants. To rearticulate economic life through such guilds, that brook no state interference, was the dream of the Guild Socialists. Workers are the producers and they should control their own activities. The Guild Socialist and the Syndicalist thoughts have contributed to the idea of Workers' Control of Industry.

A noteworthy distinction is that the trend of socialist thought represented by Lassalle and others, not excluding Marx, was primarily concerned with the worker as a citizen, as a *consumer*, while the Syndicalists, and more so the Guild Socialists, thought of the worker as a *producer*. Each man has a multiple personality. Any philosophy that takes into consideration only one aspect of man's activities truncates itself. The *desideratum* in the traditional socialist thought was sought to be filled up by the Guild Socialists. They were further interested in extending the democratic principle from political sphere "to any and every form



of social action, and, in especial, to industrial and economic fully as much as to political affairs." (G. D. H. Cole : *Guild Socialism*, 4-5). The extension of political democracy into producers' democracy and the elaboration of functional approach to social problems brought a new depth and richness to the socialist idea.

These two streams—pro-state and *anti-state*, fabian and guildman's,—move on....

In the meantime a new current of thought eddied forth whose outstanding representatives were Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin.

### THE TITANS

A controversy raging at this time was enlivened by the scintillating contributions of Luxemburg. The controversy was between the revisionists and the Marxists on the question of the danger of a premature revolution. When we consider Economics of Socialism, we shall understand better what is meant by the maturity of revolution. Marx had suggested that the feudal order gets shattered only when a new property relationship or a new organisation of forces of production develops in society, and when the old potentialities are exhausted. When does feudalism die? Take our own country. The princes and the zamindars, the repositories of feudalism in India, are tottering only now. When did we reach that stage? Only when capitalist interests, capitalist means of production, capitalist property rights, have developed to a maturing point. Capitalism in India is undoubtedly inadequately extended; yet the forces of capitalism have matured to a considerable extent. In that connection, may I invite your attention to a little book, *Who Owns India?*, just published? There you will find a detailed analysis of India's industrial economy, and I have shown that Indian capitalism, notwithstanding its arrested expansion, has reached a high stage of integration of ownership and control. Feudalism's disruption, therefore, begins only when capitalist forces, capitalist methods of production, capitalist property relations, have reached an advanced, the bursting stage.

What applies to feudalism applies to capitalism. When does the bell toll for capitalism?—When the socialist relationships, the socialist modes of production have developed far.

What do we mean by socialisation of production? That instead of a large number of scattered producers, there emerge a few producers, few tycoons, big trusts, big combines—where the whole economy is operated by a few men. These men are more or less appointed to their positions because of their expert knowledge. Even if there is a capitalist at the top who makes profit, the men who really operate the industry must be highly trained technicians. This is, rationally speaking, a picture of a highly developed capitalist social order, which increasingly approximates socialisation of production, where the working class has become conscious, well organised, where there is an awareness of the inadequacies of the present order, where there is a desire for as well as a clear conception of a new social order. These are some of the factors that ultimately go to make up the maturity of revolution.

Now, the revisionists feared that a revolution might come too soon, a premature revolution. You have probably met persons who feel that India got her independence before her people were ready for it. Lots of people who say that our people are not ready for big changes and development, that our administrative machine is not in a position to undertake the responsibility, feel that freedom has come prematurely. Some of the revisionists felt likewise about socialism, that it might come too soon. Rosa Luxemburg gave them a classic answer. She said that although the conquest of political power by the working class cannot take place "too soon" from the point of view of *social pre-conditions*, it must, on the other hand, necessarily take place "too soon" from the point of view of *political effect*: the *maintenance of power*. "The premature revolution, the fear that keeps Bernstein awake, threatens us like a sword of Damocles and neither prayer nor supplication, fear or trembling can help us." And that for two very simple reasons: "*First of all*, such a great transformation as the passage from capitalist to socialist society is inconceivable at one blow, by victorious *coup* on the part of the proletariat. To think this possible is to relapse into real Blanquist notion. The socialist transformation presupposes a long and persistent struggle, whereby in all probability the proletariat will be thrown back more than once, so that the first time, from the standpoint of the final outcome of the struggle, it must necessarily come to power 'too soon.'



"Secondly, these 'premature' attacks of the proletariat on the political power of the State would also be impossible to avoid, because, these premature attacks are themselves a factor, and a very important factor too, in creating the political conditions for final victory. Only during the course of the political crisis accompanying its seizure of power, only in the fire of long and persistent struggles will the proletariat attain the degree of political maturity which will permit it to carry out the final great transformation."

This picture of continuous struggles, more often than not being thrown back, defeated, pushed back... still, out of the very ashes of defeat, emerging afresh, moving forward, being driven back, converting defeat into a springboard for action,—this concept of a dynamic process of political and social development has been magnificently described by Rosa Luxemburg in her analysis.

She looks at the development as through crisis to crisis, wherein the combative approach plays a far more important part than a catastrophic one. She is not concerned so much about the "R-Day." Her eyes are not rivetted on the Great Day of the Revolution, the one big General Strike, the one Big Insurrection that is going to take place. Her gaze is focussed on the fire of the struggle, the furnace of constant struggles, where defeat turns to fresh impetus for renewed efforts.

From this formulation she drew the conclusion that the enlightenment of the masses flow through and determines the unfolding of the socialist movement: "In all class struggles of the past, carried through in the interests of minorities, and in which to use the words of Marx, all development takes place in opposition to the great masses of the people, one of the essential conditions of action was the ignorance of these masses with regard to the real aims of the struggles, its material content, and its limits. This discrepancy was, in fact, the specific historic basis of the 'leading role' of the 'enlightened' *bourgeoisie*, which corresponded with the role of the masses as docile followers. But as the historical action deepens and the number of masses engaged in it increases, as class struggles embrace the whole of the lower layers of the people, it becomes the *first* movement which is in accordance with the *real interest* of the masses. That is why the enlightenment of the masses with regard to their tasks

and methods is indispensable historical condition for socialist action, just as in the former periods the ignorance of the masses was the condition for the action of the dominant classes."

From these premises, she formulated her famous *law of spontaneity* which means—one, the spontaneity of the action of masses; two, the reversal of the relationship between the masses and their leaders; it is the masses themselves who must lead the movement with their own means, and leaders are only "the executive organ of the conscious action of the masses." Naturally, she depicted this development as a tendency and not an accomplished fact. "Without doubt, the transformation of masses into confident, enlightened and lucid 'leaders', the fusion of science and the working-class dreamt of by Lassalle, is not and cannot be anything but a dialectical process, seeing that the working-class movement uninterruptedly absorbs new proletarian elements as well as recruits from other social classes. In any case, such is and will remain the dominant tendency of the socialist movement, the abolition of both the 'leaders' and the 'led.'"

This analysis led to Luxemburg's conception of mass spontaneity and the *Massenstreik* as the proletariat's chosen road to power.

#### DECISIVE FORK

In the beginning of the twentieth century the two most outstanding socialist thinkers, writers, soldiers of action, strategists, were Nicolai Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. Because the Russian Revolution succeeded, Lenin is canonised and Rosa Luxemburg's teachings are ignored. Her name has been appropriated by the communists and her fame has been misused for party and political needs of the communists. It is a misuse because the Leninist line is exactly the opposite of her's at many a significant point. Lenin believed that only the conscious leaders, the *elite*, the Communist Party, the Vanguard of the Proletariat, the most determined, the all-knowing *cadre* can lead the people; there is no such thing as spontaneous action. According to Lenin, spontaneous movement of the working class would end only in a trade union movement; political party, political work, political achievement, the seizure of power—that last great act, the bursting of the shell, breaking of the integument—all that is possible only when the working class is led by a politically con-



scious minority. The essence of Leninist thought lies in the sovereign importance of a determined and conscious political minority. Today, most of the socialists reading a few writings of Lenin conclude that socialist movement means only this: that people's movement is like a block of ice—9/10ths under water, 1/10th above, and the 1/10th alone counts. To my mind, it is a dangerous and mistaken conception. It may have succeeded in Russia for certain reasons, but it is fundamentally a fallacious theory.

Leninist ideas have got to be considered in conjunction with sometimes in juxtaposition to, the teaching of Rosa Luxemburg. She had deliberately countered the definition of Social Democrat given by Lenin. He had defined the Social Democrat as a "jacobin wedded to the organisation of the proletariat." Of that definition Luxemburg said: "Social Democracy is not wedded to the organisation of the working class; *it is the very working class movement itself.*" It is a fundamental distinction, which goes to the very heart of political strategy and tactics.

One of the contributions of Lenin was that the working class movement has to be led by a determined minority organised on the jesuitical principle, on a principle of "hierarchy," where each one is assigned his responsibility and at every level, or at every rung of the ladder, a person becomes directly responsible to those above him. If you will look at the Chart III, Table IV, you will find that the second distinctive characteristic of a totalitarian party is described as "vertical mobility of opinion." The flow of opinion can travel only from top to bottom, there is no horizontal mobility (I shall come to it again when I describe the structure of parties). The essence of Leninist party is this vertical mobility. From the smallest cell to the highest authority, there may be contact, but there is no contact among the cells *inter se*. Each cell will have contact with the Centre, but not among the cells themselves. So, Lenin projected into the socialist movement the concept of a political party which was based more upon a military organisation than on any democratic organisation. This conception of a para-military organisation of a political party, a party of professional revolutionaries was developed by Lenin. Men have to be picked up, they have to be trained into "the vocation of leadership," just as men are trained to become engineers, doctors, lawyers. Lenin believed that these leaders would lead,

while others would follow. Rosa Luxemburg, on the other hand, had said that Social Democracy must be equated with the working class movement as a whole. It is the business of the socialist movement to abolish the distinction between the leaders and the led. These basic differences between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg are significant.

It was mainly to explain the Leninist idea that in Chart I, I have divided leadership into two categories: "elite" and "associative."

In Leninist conception, leadership will be in the hands of the select, chosen not by the people, not necessarily by the workers, but by the all powerful top leadership, the architects of history. It is the claim of the communists, that they are trying to work in the interests of the workers, and that they know their interests better than the workers themselves.

It was Rousseau who first said that there is a "General Will" which is distinct from the individual will; he further made the distinction between the actual will and the real will. You may be a thief. Your individual will as a thief will be that you should escape, but the general will would be that you should be punished. Rousseau argued that the general will is, in fact, more of your real will than your actual will. Let us try to understand this a little more. Who really embodies that general will? By a logical process you come to the conclusion that the man who embodies the general will is the one who is conscious of the general will—that is, the leader. The frightening implications of this theory are ably brought out by Prof. Hobhouse in his book, *The Metaphysical Theory of State*.

Lenin argued more or less on the same lines—that the general will of the worker is represented by the Communist Party. The individual will may be anything. The actual will is erratic; the general will is single-pointed and relentless.

This is the second major contribution that Lenin made to socialist thought and strategy.

Socialism has thus received varying accents; each new school has brought out a fresh facet of the socialist idea. Is it possible to have a definition that covers the entire gamut of its



meaning? The *Encyclopaedia of the Labour Movement* gives us a satisfactory, *i.e.*, comprehensive, definition :

“Socialism is a working-class doctrine and movement aiming through the class struggle, at the collective control of society, by the capture of the State machine by the workers and the establishment of self-government in industry.” (Vol. III, p. 154.)

Different schools emerge through their varying emphasis on any one of the five clauses that make up the above definition.

DICTATORSHIP

(E)

CIVIL  
LIBERTIES  
FOR ALL

PARLIAMENT-  
ARY ELECTIONS

NO BOURGEOIS  
PARTY CAN  
EXIST

NO PR  
PART  
TH  
RULI

PARTY

ATIC

RESPONSIBILITY  
OF LEADERS TO  
THE MEMBERS

IDEOLOGICAL  
TOLERANCE

RESTRICTED  
MEMBERSHIP



PROLETARIAN  
(ONE PARTY STATE)

PROLETARIAN  
TY OTHER  
AN THE  
NG PARTY

CIVIL LIBERTIES  
ONLY FOR THE  
PARTY IN POWER

PLEBISCITE, NO  
ELECTION

TOTALITARIAN

VERTICAL  
MOBILITY  
OF OPINION

CENTRALISED  
DIRECTION

CONFORMITY

### Lecture III

## POLITICS OF SOCIALISM

In Chart I, I had divided *attitude to the state* into *favourable* and *critical*, and *critical* was further split up into *consistent* and *ambivalent*. These terms characterise different attitudes. It is our business now to discover the reasonings and experiences that determine and justify the attitudes. The four tables given in Chart III bring together and focus the reasonings and experiences.

A favourable attitude can be taken up only where the state is so organised that it helps the working people in their efforts at amelioration and emancipation. The *attitude* is therefore determined by the *content* of the state. Favourable attitude can develop only where the state has a *positive* content. What are its criteria? Civil liberties, adult suffrage, responsible government and a whole complex of autonomous bodies, organised democratically, constitute the core of such a state. Such a society would be able to evoke a favourable attitude, to enlist people's allegiance. Favourable attitude towards a state lacking these qualities would be an act of faith, not a reasoned surmise.

### CHARTISM

In the history of the working class various attempts have been made to put positive content into the state. The earliest and the best known was the Chartist Movement in Great Britain. "The years 1825 to 1830 were the period of its incubation; from 1831 to the end of 1834 it developed its theories and exhibited great intellectual vigour; from 1837 to 1842 it received . . . its practical and organised form; and from 1849 onwards its vitality was rapidly ebbing away and it died in 1855, leaving only here and there scattered stragglers who obstinately refused to believe that Chartism was extinct." (M. Beer: *A History of British Socialism*.)

The Chartist Movement grew out of a syndicalist mood of the workers which had been given, after the disillusion of



1832, an anti-parliamentary slant by Owen. Two lines of policies struggled for mastery in the movement: the Moral Force Group led by Feargus O'Connor and the Physical Force Group led by William Lovett. The movement led to a tremendous deepening of the trade union organisations and inspired a number of mass actions including a general strike. But the developments that have given the name to the movement were the elaboration and adoption of the People's Charter. The "six-point" Charter made the following demands: (1) universal suffrage; (2) equal electoral districts; (3) abolition of property qualifications for parliamentary candidates; (4) annual parliaments; (5) secret ballot; (6) payment to members of parliament.

England has a venerable Chartist tradition. You have all heard of the *Magna Carta*, the Great Charter. Through the Charter, the feudal barons were able to wring out of the King concessions and advantages. Though it marked a triumph of feudal aristocracy, to the extent it put restrictions on the authority of the Crown, it became, as later constitutional *pundits* have called it, "a palladium of nation's liberties." The People's Charter was inspired by the same tradition, and the attempt to make the structure of the state adequately democratic was carried through with a variety of efforts, including agitation, organisation and direct action.

### MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

The Chartist Movement focussed attention on adult suffrage and other demands that would make the state responsible to the people. Does the People's Charter exhaust the meaning of democracy?

The Chartist reforms, valuable as they are, do not touch the core of democracy. Surely, citizens cannot vote once a year and then go to sleep. They have to be associated with the processes and responsibilities of administration. Its complexity will have to be broken up for easy association. There may be the Parliament at the centre, but below it there must be State Assemblies, District Boards, Village Panchayats, Co-operatives, Ward Committees, Community Centres. Their respective powers have to be allotted and satisfactorily dovetailed. Such is the pulsating fabric of a democratic state evolved in the past century

or more. (cf. M. Follett : *The New State*; R. M. MacIver : *The Modern State*.)

A positive approach to the state means to strive to endow the state with adult suffrage, civil liberties, representative government and the web of associative life. That the whole drift of industrial civilization demands such a state is the view of many an acute thinker : "Not only under democratic conditions, but wherever modern industrial civilization exists, the nature of authority undergoes a transformation. A modern society with its complexity of organisation, becomes a multi-group society. It possesses no longer the homogeneity of culture that has pervaded former types of society, even when they were sharply divided by class and caste. There is no longer one religion, one scale of values, one pervasive indoctrination. A multi-group society is a multi-myth society. Its appropriate form of government can be based only on some form of myth that accommodates conflicting myths, and that condition is met by the myth of democracy." (R. M. MacIver: *The Web of Government*.)

There are many socialists who therefore believe that, in democracy alone socialism can be cradled and a positive state is the very foundation of all further achievements. To create such a state and to preserve it is their effort. That is the favourable approach.

## TWO APPROACHES

As against that there is the other extreme. The state is conceived as an instrument of exploitation, political action is viewed as a dangerous entanglement. The exponents of this viewpoint are anti-parliament, anti-election, fervid no-changers, for whom legislatures are houses of sin, where the edge of revolutionary fervour gets blunted. As a French wit has said, there is more in common between two persons who are members of Parliament, one of whom is a member of a revolutionary party and the other is not, than between two persons, who are both members of a revolutionary party but one of whom is a member of Parliament and the other is not. This is a typical syndicalist viewpoint which is consistently critical of the state and hostile to governments.

Lassalle was among the first socialists to develop a positive attitude towards the state. Of him Rosa Luxemburg had said :



"He dreamt of marrying science with the working class movement." He also thought of making the state an instrument of workers' emancipation. It was he who said that "if you will not make use of the state as an instrument, you will confront it as an obstacle." Therefore, he said, workers must demand adult suffrage, fight for it. Once they get it, with the large number of votes they command, provided they are conscious and organised, they can capture the state machine, and use it for their own ends. He linked up his view with his theory that the state cannot be a mere *night watchman*. The functions of the state can never be confined to that of a *ring-master*! The state must have a positive role. Lassalle was the father of the "Welfare State," though he did not coin that phrase.

The Fabians were keen about the local bodies. George Bernard Shaw, one of the greatest men of letters, began his political career from a borough council. Shaw was a vain person, yet his arrogance did not prevent him from addressing "soap-box" meetings. The Fabians believed in building from the bottom; they were not ashamed of working in a borough council or a minor municipality. Their approach was to make even these little bodies significant, vital, and, above all, endow them with democratic content. Every election, no matter how small, was meaningful to them. Whatever be the committee, the Fabians approached their work with such thoroughness and industry that not only they made themselves indispensable but made the committee fruitful. Their favourable view of the state was based upon the belief, shared by Jean Jaures and many other contemporary socialists, that the capitalist state is, or can be made, *penetrable for socialism*.

Those with a negative approach, as I said, are the syndicalists and the communists. It was to correct those among the communists who said that to stand for parliament is to betray revolution—those who took a completely negative attitude—that Lenin wrote his *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*.

#### SHAPED BY EXPERIENCE

Significantly, critical characterisation of the state has been made, by and large, by persons who have lived, or who have grown up, in an undemocratic state. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin,

—they were all citizens of Czarist Russia, where no liberties, no democratic rights, existed. Take some of the Germans. Rosa Luxemburg, who shared, upto a point, the views of Lenin, came from Poland which did not even exist on the political map of Europe, and she lived in Germany. The German people enjoyed only limited political rights. The positive approach did not come easily to persons with such a background.

The *neutral* attitude to the state, as I have called it, has been developed, by and large, by men who have lived in the democratic climate. Where conditions are such that no matter how hard the people fight, the state would never be endowed with positive content, one cannot take up a neutral, much less a favourable attitude. Take China. From 1911, when the Manchus were overthrown, till today, no elections have taken place in that country. Never had the people an opportunity to show what they felt about the party in power, never had the people a chance to express their resentment against the inefficiency, corruption and oppression of the rulers. Where no civil liberties exist, where political parties are not allowed to function, where local autonomy does not exist, where there are no periodical elections to influence the patterns of policies and determine the character of government, there inevitably will be a hostile attitude to the state. But in states where democratic rights and liberties exist, or where democratic rights and liberties can be won, such an attitude is unlikely to find favour with the people.

The Leninist characterisation of state is highly critical, not only is the state characterised as a class state but as a class dictatorship. There is a substratum of truth in the analysis; but the conclusions drawn are sweeping and general: the extreme is proffered as the norm! It is not only unhistorical but un-Marxian to suggest that every bourgeois state is, or must become, a dictatorship that denies rights and liberties to the working people. The position is determined by the positive content that workers succeed or fail to put in the state.

The core of the Leninist theory is that the class state of the *bourgeoisie*, the dictatorship of the *bourgeoisie*, can be overthrown only by the class state of the proletariat functioning through the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.

It is argued that the experiences of the Paris Commune of 1871 led Marx to the formulation of the new theory. With its



20,000 victims killed and almost 140,000 workers arrested, the Commune became in international socialist thought a symbol of class antagonism between the *bourgeoisie* and the proletariat recognised to be insoluble by peaceful means. It led Marx, we are told, to a revision of certain points in his *Communist Manifesto*, particularly he stressed the view that the "working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purpose."

In 1875, in his *critique* of the German Social Democratic Party's programme adopted at the Gotha Congress, Marx wrote: "Between the capitalist and communist society lies the period of change of one into the other. This corresponds to a political transition period in which the State can be nothing else than a *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*." Marx unfortunately offered no further elucidation of the momentous phrase.

The Leninist superstructure is erected upon the above formulation of Marx. As often happens a segment of opinion is canonised and the rest is ignored. To have a full picture, it needs to be remembered that in the *very* critique Marx under-scored the need of waging the class struggle in and through a *democratic republic*. And then follows a pregnant passage :

"Freedom consists in the transformation of the State from an organ dominant over society into an organ subordinate to society. And today, too, the various existing forms of State are free or not free in the measure in which they circumscribe 'the freedom of the state'."

It is also necessary to remember that even after the Paris Commune, Marx in his famous speech at Amsterdam, delivered in 1872, had said: "We do not claim that the means necessary for bringing about this aim (the emancipation of labour) will be the same everywhere. We must know that we must take account of the institutions, customs and traditions of various countries, such as the United States and Great Britain—and if I know your institutions better I should perhaps add Holland—where the workers will be able to achieve their aims by peaceful means. But this will not be the case in all countries."

The distinction was obviously made on the basis of the content of a state. Where democratic rights and liberties exist, social transformation can be essayed by peaceful means. Nay, some

socialists have gone further and asserted their belief that the triumph of the working class is possible only in a democratic framework. Engels, for instance, wrote in 1891 to the German Social Democratic Party:

“If anything is certain it is that the Party and the working class can triumph only under the form of the democratic republic. This is precisely the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

And, indeed, it was the democratic parliamentary republic that Engels had in mind, for he added that under all circumstances the programme must include “*the demand for the concentration of all political power in the hands of a representative assembly of the people*” (emphasis Engels’).

The Leninist theory is sound only in countries that lack democracy, in the states that are devoid of positive content. Lenin, great though he was, did not escape the influence of his environments. The special circumstances of Russia are generalised and made the basis of a major theoretical formulation. The danger implicit in this situation was seen, and the necessary warning sounded, by Rosa Luxemburg as early as 1918 :

“By their vigorously revolutionary attitude; their exemplary force of action, and their unshakable fidelity to international socialism, they (Bolsheviks) have truly done everything it was possible to do in such diabolically difficult conditions. The danger begins at that point where, making a virtue of necessity, they turned the tactics which they had been compelled to adopt by these terribly difficult conditions into a complete theory, and commended its acceptance to the international proletariat as a model of socialist tactics. By doing this, they put forward their own personalities, where they ought not to be involved, and hide their real and incontestable historic merit under the bushel of faults imposed on them by necessity. Thus they render a bad service to the cause of international socialism in whose name they struggled and suffered, when they claim to add new truths to the general fund of socialist ideas, *new truths which are in reality old errors committed in Russia under the pressure of necessity...*” (italics mine).



It is obvious that the distinction between a positive state and a negative state is fundamental.

Provided the state has a positive content, provided the people understand democratic rights, it is possible to adopt a neutral, nay, a favourable, attitude to the state. If the state, however, lacks positive content, if you have neither the strength nor the will to put the positive content, willy-nilly you develop the critical approach. Whether you will succeed or fail will be determined by forces beyond your control.

#### COALITION: RIGHT AND WRONG

What happens if you take up a neutral attitude of using the state if you can, and fighting the state if it interferes? Various possibilities open out. Socialists, even when in a minority, might agree to participate in a non-socialist government, nay—they might do so in their individual capacity. In France, Millerand, who was one of the leaders of the French Socialist Party, in 1899 joined in that fashion the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet. *Such a step can have no sanction of the socialist movement.* Participation in a non-socialist or anti-socialist government not at the instance of the party or the movement but on one's own would be a betrayal of socialism. Such an act does not denote a favourable attitude to the state, it is unlikely to result in putting positive content in the state.

What about those who favour coalition with non-socialist parties? There would be no individual participation, but a coalition between *parties*. Such a coalition might take place *in normal circumstances, in a war emergency, in times of economic difficulties*: these are the three possibilities.

Coalition in normal circumstances exists today in some of the North European countries. The governmental power is shared by the socialists with non-socialists. In Israel, too, the position is similar. A number of socialists believe that such a policy would help in putting positive content in the state, that through such a policy it would be possible to convert the state, from an instrument of oppression of the people, into a Welfare State. They have developed the state into a Welfare State in the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland and to a lesser extent in Belgium and Holland. No matter

what some critics say, the fact cannot be gainsaid that in these countries the state is verily a mother to the people. They may have their own difficulties, but compared to the difficulties that we face in our country, the state there really cherishes the people. It is argued by some socialists that such an achievement would have been impossible without their participation in a coalition government. I am not in a position to say the last word on the subject. It is my tentative opinion that it would be unwise in countries like ours for a socialist party to enter into a coalition government in normal times.

### WAR EMERGENCY

Now what about coalition in a war emergency? Coalitions have been common in such emergencies. The British Labour Party entered into a coalition with the Conservative Party—not only in the World War II, but also during the first World War. Arthur Henderson, the leader of the Labour Party, was associated with Lloyd George, the then Liberal Prime Minister of England. In the last war, Attlee and his colleagues were members of the Cabinet that was presided over by Winston Churchill. During war emergencies, socialists have often joined a *government of consolidation*. Here again, we encounter a variety of experiences. During the first World War, the British Labour Party participated in the Cabinet, but an influential section of the party refused to support the war, and as such refused to be associated with the government. That section was led by Ramsay Macdonald and Philip Snowden. After the war, it was the section that had non-co-operated in the war, in howsoever small a measure, that won the leadership of the party. In the second World War, the section that co-operated was able not only to retain the leadership of the Labour Party but to give the party the first real spell of power. Though Ramsay Macdonald and Snowden emerged as leaders of the Labour Party after the first World War, the party's organisation was really built by Arthur Henderson. The man who made the "mistake" of joining the War Cabinet, at the behest of the party of course, was really the architect of the party's splendid organisation, so impregably devised that the communists have not succeeded in making any dents in it though they have tried hard and long.



It is unwise to assert, in the light of varied experiences of war emergencies, that a collaboration with non-socialist parties would always be harmful to the socialist movement. The evidence on this point is inconclusive and an open mind on it is indicated.

The socialist movement in India may some day be called upon to make up its mind, whether, in times of a war emergency, it would agree to be associated with a non-socialist government. The question has to be answered not in terms of abstract theories but in terms of safeguarding national freedom, in terms of making the state positive under the stress of war. There can be more than one answer to the question and I would invite you ceaselessly to explore the subject further by shifting the evidence from, and the experiences of, other countries.

#### COALITION—A DISASTER ?

In times of economic difficulties there have been suggestions that there should be coalition governments. I believe such a coalition would be disastrous to the socialist movements. In times of economic difficulties, either the socialist movement is able to have *full power*, or the socialist movement refuses to have anything to do with the government. In this connection, Ramsay Macdonald, of 1931 and after, is a tragic pointer and a stern warning.

As it happened, only this afternoon, I got supporting evidence on the subject under discussion. One of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Japan, who was till recently the Speaker of the Japanese Diet, came to see me. Discussing the activities of the party in Japan, he said that in the election of 1945, 100 members were returned to the Parliament on the Social Democratic ticket. In 1947 elections, 146 S.D.P. members were elected. The socialists emerged as the largest single party in the Parliament. They decided to form a coalition government and so invited certain non-socialist parties to participate in the coalition government. What was the result ? After two years, in the 1949 general elections the Social Democratic Party's representation fell precipitously from 146 to 48. It was almost a *debacle*. Why the rout ? I asked him. He gave two reasons. *First*, because the government had been formed in a country which was still under occupation. The government had to function within the framework of policy laid down by the Ameri-

can Occupation Authorities, which meant that the state was not a free state and could not be a democratic state. *Secondly*, it was a coalition wherein the SDP had to make concessions that ultimately corroded its own foundations. This little illustration from an Asian country may be added as a footnote to what I said earlier.

I would like to sum up this part of the discussion by drawing your attention to a relevant, and coming from such a source—a highly significant and strategic, passage from Rosa Luxemburg :

“No doubt there may be moments in the development, or the decline of bourgeois society, when the complete taking over of power by the representatives of the workers is not yet possible, but when, nevertheless, their participation in the bourgeois government would appear necessary. Such a moment, for instance, would be when the liberty of the country or the democratic achievement of the people, such as the Republic, are called into question, at a moment, for instance, when the bourgeois government is too compromised and already too disorganised to persuade the people to follow it without the support of the representatives of the working class. In such a case, of course, the representatives of the working people would not have the right for love of abstract principle to refuse to defend the common cause.” (Rosa Luxemburg : *Reform or Revolution ?*)

### CLASS STATE

I have already told you that as against the neutral attitude prevalent in democratic countries there is another attitude, the critical attitude, which, as I said, is conditioned by the experiences of non-democratic countries. What exactly is the analysis that is offered by those who adopt a critical attitude or whose characterisation of the state is critical ? I have listed a few of the more important points in Chart III, Table I. *It is a class state.* This is a basic conception of Lenin's thought. It is also a significant part of Marxist analysis. Still, it must be admitted, that the idea of class state finds a more dominant place in the Leninist ideology than in the Marxist. What is a class state ? A state, according to the exponents of this point of view, is ultimately governed by those elements and interests in society



that are economically the most powerful. Those who control the economic life, those in whose favour the property relations are organised, those who stand to benefit by the organisation of the forces of production, they ultimately decide the character of the state. The state is not something that is neutral. The state is not something that is above the battle. The state is not like a transparent cup wherein you can pour a liquid of any colour and expect the glass to reflect it. On the contrary, the state is completely conditioned by and is an instrument of the dominant class. Under the feudal economy, where property relations are in favour of the land-owning class, where forces of production are so organised that from the concerted labour of the people the greatest advantage is drawn by the land-owning class, the state is an instrument of the land-owning class. In a society where the economy is based upon slavery, those who are able to enjoy the labour of slaves, those who happen to own the slaves, determine the character of the state. In a capitalist economy it is the men of capital, the great barons of industry, the masters of finance—these are the men in whose favour property relations are organised and who draw the greatest possible advantage from the organisation of the means of production; they control the state.

By and large, such an analysis is true. But it is true to the extent the common people have not succeeded in obtaining adult franchise in winning civil liberties for all, and in getting the structure of the state suffused with various forms of associative life, various forms of democratic organisations. If the structure of the state remains wholly dominated by autocratic or bureaucratic impulses, such a state cannot have positive content. But if, through the organisation of local and functional autonomy, whether it be village panchayats, whether it be trade unions, whether it be co-operatives, the state has been transformed, there is then a different tale to tell. Take, for instance, Switzerland. Switzerland is considered to be the classic land of democracy. As in our country we have states, so in Switzerland the units of the federation are known as *cantons*. Some of the cantons have such a democratic life, the *ethos* of administration is so wholly popular, that not only the people elect their representatives, but they initiate laws by a process known as *initiative*, and their vote needs to be taken, through a process of *referendum*, before a bill gets on the statute book. In Switzerland, prohibi-

tion, for instance, would not be introduced merely by enacting a law. It would have to be referred to the people, and only by a majority vote of the people could prohibition be made statutorily binding. There is also the *recall*, a procedure whereby a person who is elected to some position can be called back by the voters, because they feel that he no longer enjoys their confidence.

A web of associative life, a state conceived in terms of a network of community organisations, will be a democratic state. If these factors are absent, there is no doubt that the state might become a class state. The state can become an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class over the ruled, but if the people are alert, if the people are organised, if they have built up and cherished democratic traditions, the state would succeed in developing positive content. *It is my contention that only a positive state can be a socialist state. No matter what class is in power, socialism is inconceivable except in terms of a positive state. Socialism in a negative state must result in a distortion, a caricature, a falsification of all that socialism stands for.*

It is said that the milk of a lioness cannot be held in any vessel other than that of gold. In all other vessels the milk pierces through. One might likewise say that the only vessel that can hold the essence of socialism, the vibrating impulse of socialism, is democracy or a *positive state*.

The concept of a *class state*, therefore, is valid within certain well-defined limits. I have little doubt that an *anti-democratic* state would be a class state. I have no doubt that, where people have failed to endow the state with a positive content, it would be a class state, *i.e.*, an oppressive state even under proletarian *aegis*. Such a class state would be eminently unsuited to move forward to socialism, to build up an economy of abundance and a culture of freedom. Likewise, no socialist revolution can succeed unless within a measurable span of time, say two or three years of its coming to power, it is able to endow the state with a positive content.

Where a positive state exists, or can be created, it would be a sign of weakness to develop a strategy framed on the basis of a class state. In a letter to Hyndman, written in 1880, Marx had said :

"If you say that you do not share the views of my party



for England I can only reply that party considers an English revolution not *necessary*, but, according to historical precedents, *possible*. If the unavoidable evolution turns into revolution, it would not only be the fault of the ruling class, but also of the working class. Every pacific concession of the former has been wrung from them by 'pressure from without'. Their action kept pace with that pressure and if the latter has more and more weakened, it is only because the English working class know not how to wield their power and use their liberties, both of which they possess legally.

"In Germany the working class were fully aware from the beginning of their movement that you cannot get rid of a military despotism but by a revolution." (H. M. Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, 283.)

#### UNITED FRONT

The Leninists have a special understanding of united front which is invariably meant to absorb the uniting parties or to expose them. It is a boa-constrictor's embrace: consume or crush! This policy is justified on the basis that the communists alone have seen the light, they alone have the monopoly of truth, they have a patent in revolution! Having taken out the patent, they might occasionally allow others to use it, but only to gain more advantage. Absorption or annihilation, rule or ruin, has always been the basic strategy of monopolists. You probably know what Lenin said about Henderson, that he supported him as a rope supports the man it hangs! It is the classic description of united front as conceived by the communists. It is, of course, presumed that the other fellow suffers from a total lack of understanding, lacks the clarity of a Leninist, or he has moral inhibitions! The communists are never burdened with scruples. They know that they are the chosen instruments of history. In them history becomes conscious of itself! A beautiful but meaningless phrase, because history is not and never can be conscious of itself, because it is not a sentient being.

Such in reality is the concept of united front from below. It flows logically from the communist theory that the communists are the sole custodians of truth.

## WRECK IT !

Entering Parliament to wreck it is a tactic fashioned by the experiences of undemocratic states. In India, too, at one time, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru had entered the Councils to wreck them. The greatest exponents of the tactic were the Parnellites of Ireland. In their search for focussing attention on Ireland's demand for freedom they stumbled upon the tactic of entering Parliament to wreck it. This tactic is popular in two circumstances : (1) Where the Parliament has no real authority, as was the case with the Indian Councils and Assemblies during the British period; or, (2) where the people want autonomy for themselves, where a people feel that they are completely distinct, completely dissimilar, from the rest of the community, where a minority feels so completely out of tune with the majority that the only use that the minority has of the Parliament is to exploit it to facilitate the ultimate partition. An interesting instance of this type came to light in our City. From 1940 to 1947, in the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the Muslim League members did their best to bring the working of the Corporation to a standstill. There, too, the tactic of entering a legislature to wreck it was followed, because they felt that they were not a part of the community, they belonged to a different nation altogether.

Where a Parliament is not sovereign, where the legislature is not endowed with rights and powers, where it is only a toy legislature, there will be a tendency to enter it, to expose its hollowness and to wreck it.

## EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARISM

Lastly, let us turn to the capture of power through extra-parliamentary means. The classic theory is that power cannot be captured through parliamentary means, that even if the workers get a majority, they will never have effective power, because the state is a class state. The state being a class state will normally see to it that the workers never win a majority. If by chance the workers win a majority, there will be flight of capital and other obstructions from capitalists, bureaucrats and the armed forces. There will either be erosion of workers' strength or the workers' government would be overthrown. One must be therefore always prepared for extra-parliamentary, that is, non-



democratic means of coming to power, or for over-turning the established state. That the state can be taken out of the hands of one class and put into the hands of another class only through non-parliamentary, generally violent means, is a basic assumption of Marxists.

As I have already said, this is true of negative states; in their case there is no other alternative. Surely, you cannot capture Nepal from the infamous Ranas by winning elections, for there are no elections ! You have to resort to extra-parliamentary, even insurrectionary, methods in Nepal. Mao Tse-tung had no alternative except to fight with arms against Chiang Kai-shek. But where it is possible for people to create a positive state, should the same policy be adopted ? A confirmed Leninist would answer, Yes ! *But in no state, with positive content, have the Leninists been able to do what they assert in theory.* Take, for instance, France, Italy . . . take any country in Europe where the state has been endowed with positive content. The communists there have been compelled to tread, as road to power, parliamentary chambers and work for a parliamentary majority. No other methods has so far succeeded in the last thirty years.

The Leninists are proud of their tradition of eliciting theory from practice. It is the essence of Leninism that theory is wedded to *praxis* : that theory alone is true which is tested in the crucible of practice. For over thirty years the crucible of practice has said that where a state has positive content insurrection does not work. Yet, incense is being burnt, flowers are being put, garlands are being woven, to old ideas and discarded theories. They talk about the wedding of theory with practice ! But when it comes to realising the consequences of that wedding, they hold back, just like Vishwamitra confronted with the consequences of his intimacy with Menaka, and turn away their face from the unwelcome progeny, Shakuntala !

Characterisation of the state will depend upon whether the state has a positive content or a negative content. If it is possible to put positive content in the state, a critical approach is un-historical, illogical, likely to hamper the growth of the socialist movement. If positive content can be put, the attitude must be neutral, and as more and more positive content is put in the state, neutral attitude must change to a favourable one. So, the neutral conception of state goes with a state that is becoming

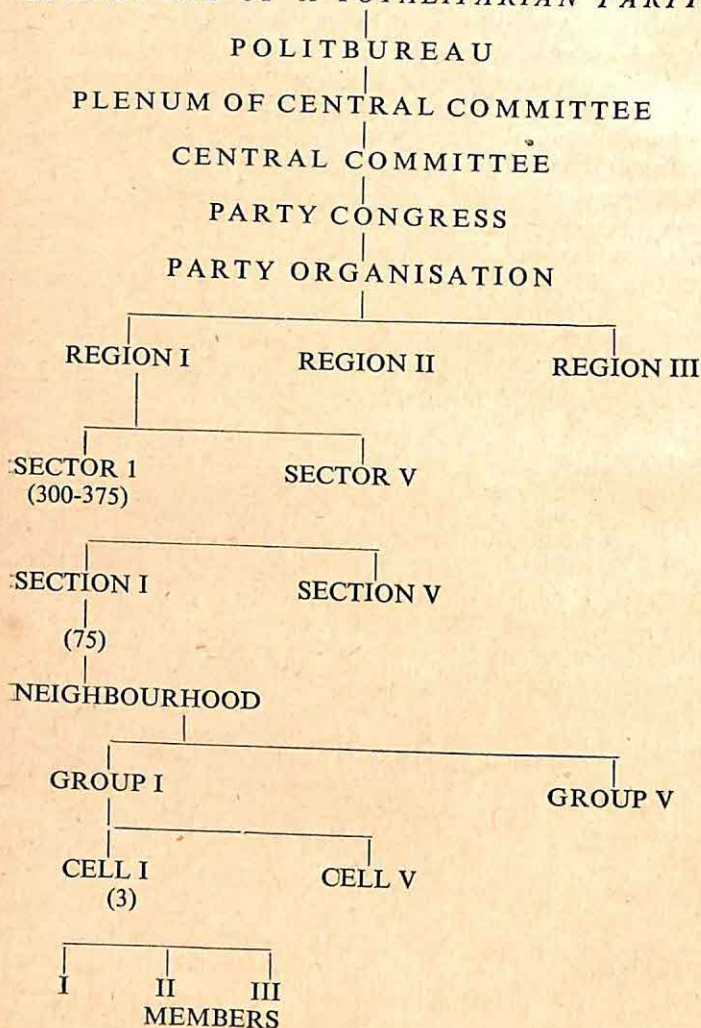
positive; the more positive its content, the more favourable will be the approach. The more negative the state, the more critical will be the approach. Then perhaps it will become necessary to capture power through extra-parliamentary means. Even then, it would be suicidal to follow the policy of United Front for exposure that is followed by the Leninists and their fellow-travellers. The Leninists do so because they have another conception of the state—a one-party state: and they have a different conception of party, a totalitarian party. (Please turn to Chart III, Tables III and IV.) These are matters that we shall take up tomorrow.



## Politics of Socialism

*Chart III, Table V*

## STRUCTURE OF A TOTALITARIAN PARTY



## Lecture IV

### POLITICS OF SOCIALISM

Yesterday, I explained to you how it is argued by Leninists, and to a lesser extent by Marxists, that a state, as it were *ex hypothesi*, is a "class state." The concept of a neutral state is abhorrent to their theoretical understanding.

Anyway, in a capitalist society, where the state is controlled by the capitalist-class, what would you call the government? The communists call it "dictatorship of the *bourgeoisie*". The *bourgeoisie* are men who own the means of production. So it is the dictatorship of the owning class under which we are living today. This dictatorship of the owning class has to be overthrown, and when it is overthrown there will be the dictatorship of the working class, of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the few over the many can be destroyed only by a new type of dictatorship, that of the many over the few. The social pyramid, the pyramid of power, that today rests unstably on its apex, has to be put on its base. After a period, the dictatorship of the proletariat, fulfilling its specific functions, will drop off and then the state itself will wither away. Then we shall have real freedom where there will be not only an equalitarian society, but a libertarian community. To reach that goal, one has to pass through a transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such are the chaste outlines of the Leninist theory of state. Now, let us analyse it. In most study-classes this is all that is explained. The rest is taken for granted. My effort will be to break down these ideas into their component parts and show you how far they conform to the realities as we know them in the year 1950.

#### BOURGEOIS STATE

What is a bourgeois state? A bourgeois state can become an outright dictatorship. Then, of course, it is a different matter. I have already told you that where a state ceases to be democratic, you will have to adopt the critical attitude, the attitude that has been outlined on the left-hand side of Chart III, Table II. But what is a *normal* bourgeois state? What is the character of a



bourgeois state as it has evolved through history in the last 100 years or more? Such a state has certain distinct characteristics. In such a state, more than one bourgeois party exists. A bourgeois state is usually a *multi-party state*. In England, in France, in the USA, in the Scandinavian countries and in other countries where bourgeois states have developed—in India too so far our experience is the same—there have always been more than one political party, they are multi-party states. Take Great Britain. There is the Labour Party, Conservative Party, Communist Party, Liberal Party. In the USA, there is the Republican Party, Democratic Party, Progressive Party, Farmer Labour Party, and so on. In Indonesia, I am told, there are 98 political parties! In India there are half a dozen national parties and a score of regional parties and over 50 local parties. So, these are multi-party states. Even among the *bourgeoisie*, there is more than one party. The *bourgeoisie* are usually divided, split up, into a variety of parties. That is the second characteristic.

It is a favourite theorem of the Leninists that *a class has but one party, so bourgeoisie* should have but one party. But in fact there are many parties. It is therefore argued that the differences are meaningless, unreal, or that the *facade* of many parties merely covers up the dictatorship—that in truth there is just one party. Half a dozen parties might embody the wayward impulses of the *bourgeoisie*, but the General Will of the *bourgeoisie* is embodied only by one party! Which is that party no one knows. Only the Leninists know, because in them history has become conscious! This is a remarkable theory. They start by saying that only that theory is true which is tested in practice. When you tell them that in fact *bourgeoisie* have more than one political party, they say, it is an illusion, a *maya*, the reality is that there is only one party; it is because of your lack of knowledge and understanding of communism, because you have not become sufficiently class conscious, that you see three where only one exists!

#### POOR HEATHENS!

This comes very near to the Catholic conception of unity in trinity. The Catholic Church prescribes that there is Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. Father is in Heaven, Son is Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost is what unites the two. A Catholic priest asks a student, what is the Divine Trinity? The answer

is, Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. Is the Divine Trinity one or more? The correct answer is "The Divine Trinity is really a Unity." Raja Ram Mohan Roy has written a rollicking skit on a Christian missionary and three Chinamen. That was written early in the last century. A Chinaman spreading his fingers and counting them replies, "We know that Father is one, Son is two, Holy Ghost is three. How can three become one?" The padre says that it is not obvious to him because he is still a heathen! You are not a Christian, that is why you do not understand the mysteries of Christianity? Poor Raja Ram Mohan Roy never dreamt that some day the followers of Marx would also uphold similar arguments! A simple person like me sees many parties, all of them parties of the *bourgeoisie*, and therefore says so. And straightaway he is told that they are many in appearance, but one in reality! I say that facts attest that there are three election boards, three different candidates fighting an election. The crushing reply is, "You are not sufficiently class conscious, you are a 'Marxist heathen'!"

The next characteristic is that in a bourgeois state not only bourgeois but proletarian parties exist. They generally go with a state with positive content. Please remember that I am trying to point out to you that a state is to be viewed in terms of different historical, social, setting. As the background changes, the analysis has to change *pari passu*. My effort is to provide you with an instrument which helps you to understand a state in all its vicissitudes. "If these are the symptoms, there are the prescriptions." I am not a homeopath who prescribes a set of remedies for all kinds of diseases. A Leninist is a homeopath!

Civil liberties for all, is the third characteristic. In a normal bourgeois state you will find that civil liberties are enjoyed by the vast bulk of the people.

There are regular elections on the basis of adult franchise. And the government is responsible to the elected legislature. That is the fourth characteristic.

AS YOU THINK . . .

These are the four characteristics of a normal bourgeois state. Even such a state is denounced by the Leninists as a bourgeois dictatorship—if it is not a dictatorship today, it will become a dictatorship tomorrow! Bourgeois state must be a



bourgeois dictatorship. It is my effort to show to you that if you start by assuming that civil liberties are going to be taken away, you make it possible for them to be taken away. A man who says, "civil liberties do not exist for me" has virtually abandoned them; he is a culprit in the court of freedom. That is the reason why I say that your attitude, your estimate, your assessment of a situation, itself becomes a dynamic factor. If you wrongly appraise a situation, you make it possible for the forces of darkness to overcome the forces of light. If you appraise a situation aright, you make it possible for the legions of light to ward off the hordes of darkness. That is why it is so very necessary for you to be precise in your estimate. It was H. G. Wells who said that "the subtle veracity quivers broadly and mercurially between that overstatement and this understatement." Where the quivering must end, where the line of veracity has to be drawn—to discover that is ultimately the test of political maturity.

#### PROLETARIAN STATE

As against the bourgeois dictatorship what is the proletarian dictatorship? We have the experiences of the proletarian dictatorship for the past thirty years in Russia. Unfortunately for us, Trotskyites have never been able to come to power anywhere. So we do not know what in practice would have been *their* proletarian dictatorship. The Stalinists have come to power and under their dispensation, in a country *only one political party can exist*—the ruling party. The *bourgeoisie* can have no party. And for the proletariat too, only one party can exist. As all other *darshans* are false *darshans*, all other gods are false gods, there can be room for only one truth! And the Communist Party is the sole embodiment of this truth! Deliberately, would you permit falsehood to exist by the side of truth?

Here comes in the *trusteeship theory*. We have heard a lot of fun being made of Gandhiji's theory of "trusteeship." Sun Yat-sen had developed another theory, with the same name, which said that people were politically minor, they needed a trustee to look after them and the Kuomintang Party was the chosen trustee. Hence there was no need for election, *etc.*! The Leninists say the same thing about themselves! Sun Yat-sen's arguments are dismissed as foolish but history having become conscious in Stalin, Trotsky and Lenin, their arguments are the

quintessence of wisdom ! They say that people, being victims of capitalism and feudalism, lack requisite courage and understanding, and, therefore, it is argued, "we cannot leave it to the people to decide as to which party is right; it must be decided by those who can decide, those who understand." History is the most maddening intoxicant ! History having become conscious of itself in the Communist Party, can never permit any non-communist party to exist. When poor Trotsky differed from the majority opinion in the Communist Party, you know what happened to him. The whole world became for him *a planet without a visa* ! He became the world's most tragic refugee. The Communist Party created conditions wherein this great man, who at one time had dominated history, one of the architects of the modern world, faced a world where no doors were open to him. That happens when you function *a priori*, when your philosophy lays down that there can be only one proletarian party and civil liberties can exist only for that party and for none else.

Lastly, there are plebiscites, no elections. The difference between a plebiscite and an election is that in a plebiscite only one set of candidates are put up, you may vote "yes" or "no", you cannot pick and choose, you cannot show your preference. Recently, in Eastern Germany, 99.7% voted for the Communist Party candidates. Even in countries where opinions were, till recently, sharply divided, as soon as the Communist Party comes to power there emerges overnight a fissureless unity ! A plebiscite is a mass vote of confidence, where there is little scope for no-confidence and change of the leader. Hitler was a master of it, and the first great exponent of the plebiscitary democracy was Louis Napoleon III of France.

It is theoretically possible to conceive of a bourgeois state which is multi-party or uni-party. Likewise, it is possible to conceive of a proletarian state which is multi-party, or uni-party. The historical expression of a bourgeois state, except in rare circumstances, has been a multi-party state. The normal expression of a proletarian state known to us so far, except again in rare circumstance, is a uni-party state.

"DIVISION OF POWER ? No" !

In the Soviet Union, in the early days following the revolution, parties other than the Communist Party were permitted



to exist. For a time, the Menshevik Party, the Social Revolutionists—these two parties particularly could claim to be parties of the working people with the same right, the same logic, as the Communist Party,—were permitted to function. In fact, the non-working class political opinion had been reduced to a small minority. In the Soviet Union, when the Constituent Assembly was elected, the Bolsheviks got 25% of the seats, the Social Revolutionists and the Mensheviks got 62% of the seats. The remaining 13% of the seats went to the Cadet Party. The Cadet Party was a sort of a liberal party, a party of the *bourgeoisie* not necessarily the most reactionary, but composed of bourgeois elements all the same. The Social Revolutionary Party was primarily a party of the peasants. It looked at problems from the rural angle. The Social Revolutionists desired that big landed estates should be broken up, that the land should be given to the peasants, that land should belong to those who till it. As far as the Mensheviks were concerned, they were a minority of the Social Democratic Party. The Russian Social Democratic Party, as you all know, broke up, mainly on questions of organisation, into the Bolshevik Party (which means the majority faction) and the Menshevik Party (which means the minority faction).

The Menshevik Party's programme was more or less in line with the programme of the Social Democratic Parties in Western countries. It believed that it was necessary for a process of industrialisation to go through before it would be possible for a people to take the jump forward to socialism. It did not believe in proletarian dictatorship and gave its allegiance to a democratic state.

In the elections to the Constituent Assembly (1917), the only free elections ever held in Russia, the following pattern of political opinions was revealed :

<i>Party</i>	<i>No. of votes cast</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Social Revolutionary	.. 18,366,893	44
S. D. Bolshevik	.. 10,649,979	21
S. D. Menshevik	.. 668,064	} 12
Other Socialist Groups	.. 4,728,837	
Non and anti-socialist	.. 5,238,419	11

(Ref: Radkey: *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917*)

The three socialist parties together, therefore, had 77% of the vote and 87% of the seats in the Constituent Assembly. If the communists had so chosen, there could have been a coalition government of these working class parties or at least working people's parties, because the Social Revolutionaries were a party of the peasants. For a time there was an effort at a coalition, but it was a short-lived phenomenon. The period of honeymoon did not last very long, and soon the Bolshevik Party gathered up all the threads in its own hands. As Zinoviev had pointed out in one of his famous remarks—"Division of labour? yes, division of power? no." That was the characteristic Bolshevik answer.

### HIGHER DEMOCRACY !

In actual fact, therefore, in a proletarian state there are more than one *proletarian* parties. It is possible for them to function democratically. For instance, in the Soviet Union after the 1917 election as the Bolsheviks were in a minority the reins of government should have been handed over to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries or a coalition should have been formed with them. In either event, the social gains of the revolution would have survived, and people's right over political parties established. Parliamentary democracy is not and cannot be theoretically abhorrent to the proletarian state. The Cadet Party, the only party of the *bourgeoisie* represented in the Constituent Assembly, had just 13 per cent representation. Whether that representation should have been taken away from them is a matter on which there can be more than one opinion. But that the 87 per cent of the representatives had a right to sit in the Constituent Assembly, had a right to govern in the name of the people, cannot be challenged. The Bolsheviks, in the name of a higher democracy, willed otherwise. The democracy that was represented by the actual vote of the people meant little to them, and they sent troops to disperse the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly was dissolved, the members were scattered in four directions, and power was taken over by the Bolsheviks and it has remained concentrated in their hands.

The implications of the dissolution become clear when it is realised that everything of a truly progressive nature that the Bolsheviks sought at that time to achieve was also part of the



programme of other socialist parties and would have been carried out by them, for the people had empowered them to do so. The confiscation of the big landed estates had also been planned by the Social Revolutionists and Mensheviks—they *had actually put it into effect in Georgia*. The consequence of the usurpation of power by the Bolsheviks has been that the people never got an opportunity of approving or disapproving the actions of the government.

As I explained to you earlier, in a fully democratic state, not only there are periodical elections with competing party candidates, not only there are full civil liberties for the people, but there are also the rights of recall, initiative and referendum. In the Soviet Union, only one party exists. You may approve or you may disapprove of what the party does. Your vote makes not the least difference. Initially it was not so bad. The vote had not degenerated into a mere plebiscite, but, with the development of the proletarian state as brought into existence by Lenin and as perfected by Stalin, the vote got drained of all meaning. In a plebiscite, one always votes yes !

#### PARTY—THE PIVOT

All differences, therefore, had ultimately to be thrashed out *within* the folds of the Communist Party. During the early days of Soviet history you will come across a number of controversies within the party. A number of groups were organised within the party and these groups peddled their own platforms, and it was in the party congresses that these differences were discussed and ultimately ironed out. You will remember that by 1924 or so, a Left opposition group had been formed. After that group had been liquidated, a Right opposition group was formed and Stalin in due course got rid of it too. The sole expression of popular desire for a different policy was through these types of platforms within the party. But after a time, on Lenin's direction (Lenin had said that the Communist Party was not in a position to enjoy the luxury of rival platforms and groups) such platforms and groups were not permitted inside the party.

In a uni-party state, therefore, the people have no means of registering their disapproval of what the ruling party does. The sole right of people is to applaud and to approve the record

and the policy of the party in power. Naturally, any government that wants to avoid a revolution, or even a rebellion, would normally try to pursue a policy which would not completely outrage public opinion. But in a uni-party state there is no machinery whereby you can discover the changing nuances of public mind, there are no weather-cocks that register the shifting winds of public opinion. In a proletarian state, there is, thus, not only no free trade in the economic life, which is wholesome, but there is no "free trade in ideas", as Justice Holmes has called it, there is no free competition between opinions and policies in the political life, which is dangerous. In India, the Socialist Party may have something to tell you and it says it, but side by side there are scores of other parties that sell their different nostrums. Out of these competing opinions, you choose the particular opinion that appears to you significant and vital; but in a one-party state, where civil liberties are the monopoly of the party in power, no competing opinions can emerge except in an underground or a clandestine manner.

Elections assume the character of plebiscite in a one-party state and all differences of opinion have therefore to be ultimately resolved within the folds of the ruling party. That makes the party all important, the party becomes the very pivot, not only of the political life of a one-party state, but, as we shall see when we turn to Socialism and Culture, of the very life of the people. The texture of people's lives is impressed with patterns that are decided upon by the party in power. The normal opportunities of influencing the government, through criticism, opposition, and electoral defeat are not available in a one-party state. The differences of opinion among the people have to make themselves felt inside the single party. The structure of the party, its sensitiveness to public opinion and its responsiveness to the views of its members become, in such circumstances, of sovereign significance. We therefore come to the conclusion that no analysis of a one-party state, or a proletarian state, is complete without an analysis of the party.

#### ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES

What is meant by party structure? You must try to understand the two known methods of organising political parties: democratic and totalitarian.



It must be realised that a political party in a multi-party state is a voluntary association. No one can compel you, for instance, to join the Socialist Party. It will be your choice to join a particular party or another, and that decision will generally be unfettered. Maybe, there is a social compulsion in certain situations. For Indian Muslims, for instance, during the militant phase of the Muslim League agitation, it was difficult to remain outside the folds of the League. The reason is not far to seek. The Muslim League was seeking to create a uni-party state. But where the climate of opinion favours existence of more than one party, where people's minds are so tuned that they demand a free trade in ideas, there is no compulsion on any one to join a particular party. Therefore, it is a voluntary association, a free association of men who may not always *think* alike, but who are determined to *act* alike. They may differ about certain policies, but once the deliberations are over and decisions are taken, they are wont to act alike. There can be no political party wherein members have the right, and are in the habit, of acting differently. The essence of politics is action, and when it comes to the final stage of political action, whatever differences there may be in views, they have got to be brought together, brought to a focus, and the action has to be alike. When you cannot act alike, a split must take place.

In a totalitarian state, where only one party exists in the state, it would be the height of *naivete* to assert that people join it voluntarily. To remain outside the folds of the ruling party is to invite varieties of disabilities, not to speak of social obloquy. Therefore, there is a large amount of compulsion, overt or covert, on the people to join the party. And inside the party, even when there is an acute difference of opinion which breeds the desire to *act* differently, there is no possibility of breaking away from the party, or organising a new party, because, free trade of opinion is confined, if at all, to the four corners of the party.

A democratic party can exist only where there is room for more than one party. It is absurd to talk of one-party state and say that the *one* party will be democratic, because, the essence of democracy is that you can withdraw and start a new party enshrining a new point of view, adumbrating a different policy.

A minority will remain in a party only so long as it has the hope of becoming a majority; when it feels that it cannot become a majority, or where it sees that the situation is so critical that to allow one's point of view to be hushed would mean being disloyal to the people; the minority feels it to be its duty to break away from the stubborn majority and go to the people with its own point of view by organising a new party. That is the meaning of democracy. It would be flying in the face of facts to assert that party democracy, leave aside political democracy, can exist in a one-party state. One-party state, by sucking away democracy from the state, inevitably drains the ruling party of internal democracy. That is an inexorable rule, explained by laws of logic and testified to by the political experience of our tragic generation. It is one of the major achievements of the Bolsheviks and their satellites, that they have drained all vital meaning out of words. Denial of democracy is offered as higher and fuller democracy. Occupation is justified as liberation. When the communists in India decided to support the British Government in the last war, wherein the country had been involved against the wishes of the people, the war was suddenly characterised as a *People's War*. Any number of such instances can be given. Words, therefore, are totally divorced from their meanings, and that leads to confusion and intelligent discussion confronts added difficulties.

My main point is that you can have a democratic party only in a multi-party state, and it need not necessarily permit the *bourgeoisie* to have a party or parties of their own;—one can prohibit a particular section of the people from forming a party of their own; whether that is desirable or not is a matter we can go into later. But as far as the working people are concerned, it cannot be gainsaid that there must be room for more than one party, because there will always be more than one point of view. When we come to Economics of Socialism, we shall see that it is possible within the same class, or a group of classes, to have a variety of policies, each one of them entitled to the name of socialism. It is one of the tragedies perpetrated by the Bolsheviks that a myth has been created that a class can have only one party. History belies this assertion, logic denies it. A class not only can, but must, have more than one party; if the people are to be sovereign.



## OPEN OR CLOSED ?

Now, what are the characteristics of a democratic party ? The first is, *open membership*. It should be open to any person to join the party. You cannot call a party democratic, if a person can be prevented, except for some very general reasons, from joining the party. Where the membership is hand-picked and chosen, where an entrant can be black-balled, where special obstacles are put in the way of membership, the party cannot remain a democratic party, because, those who control the party machine are likely to use their powers to prevent men and women who differ from their point of view from joining the party and swelling the ranks of heresy or opposition. Open membership, therefore, means, that party merely says, "Here is our programme; those who believe in it are welcome to the party." There may be a few general conditions, *e.g.*, that only citizens of a particular country can join the party, but they will apply generally. There would not be separate scrutiny of every entrant, and no vagaries in admission. In a *closed party* the members are picked and chosen. The recruitment is not free, it is determined from the top. The open party, therefore, is one wherein any person who accepts the conditions of membership, subscribes to the creed and programme of the party, can become a member and enjoy rights and privileges as well as responsibilities of party membership. But in a closed party, the leadership selects new entrants. You cannot join, for instance the Communist Party, even if you want to. The Communist Party will decide whether you are fit to be in its ranks. Many may be called, but a few will be chosen. In the open party, on the other hand, whosoever knocks at the door can get admission : "Knock and it shall be open to you."

## MOBILITY OF OPINION

The second main characteristic of a democratic party is *free mobility of opinion*. To understand this point clearly I would like you to turn to Chart III, Table V. How is a totalitarian party in a country organised ? The Chart shows the organisational structure. The valuable chart is prepared on the basis of detailed information provided about the operation of the Communist Party in France in a book recently published by Rossi, a former leader of the party. To my knowledge, it is the only authoritative book that gives factual information, supported by extracts from Communist Party documents, secret circulars,

etc., about the organisation and operation of the C.P. The international uniformity of the communists entitles us to believe that the pattern of organisation is the same the world over. The echelons in the structure might be increased or decreased to meet the needs of a larger or a smaller country.

Under the party organisation, that is, the headquarters, there are *regions*. Every region has four to five *sectors*. There may be any number of regions but under every region, there will be either four or five sectors. Under every sector there will be four to five *neighbourhood groups*. Under every neighbourhood group there will be four to five cells, and every cell will be made up of *three members*. A neighbourhood group is thus made up of 15 members, a section is made up of 75, a sector is made up of 375 and a region is made up of 1,200 to 2,000 members. And the party may be made up of any number of regions. Such is the organisational set-up.

Then, what happens? How does the party function? A secret circular of the CP makes the position clear. The relevant portion from it is given below :

"The organisational unit of our party is the group of three, and no party meetings may be held with more than three comrades present. The connecting link that joins the groups of three to one another is an official of the neighbourhood or the shop headquarters whose identity should, if possible, be known only to the group leaders in the neighbourhood or shop (with whom he deals individually), and to the section leaders from whom he receives directives. (The cell members know their group leader, but neither the members, much less the leaders of other cells.) Each of the sections divided into neighbourhood leader is responsible for more than 4 or 5 group leaders. Each region is similarly divided into sectors, and no sector comprises of more than 4 or 5 sections. The regional leaders are thus able, by communicating with at the most four or five persons to make their control effective throughout the territory assigned to them. The headquarters of each region, sector, section and neighbourhood has a maximum complement of three members each of whom is assigned a specific function." (A. Rossi : *A Communist Party in Action*, 1963).



Now, suppose a member has a doubt, or has a suggestion to make. If you are a member of the CP you will be assigned to a three-men cell. More than three members shall not meet—that is the rule. If they meet, it would be an act of indiscipline and if your higher-ups so desire, you can be removed from the party for that offence. Any decision that your cell takes shall be communicated to the leader of the group. Nobody else knows what decisions are being taken in the other cells. Maybe, similar discussions are going on. But each cell has to pass on the decision to the higher authority. The group leader will have to collect decisions of each separate cell, but there would not be any communication between these cells, and if from other cells similar decisions come, the group leader will pass them on to the section leader, and so on. Orders come from top to bottom, suggestions go from bottom upwards. You can travel only up and down. You rise just like a lift, from the ground floor to the top floor—straight and always in the groove. One lift has no connection with another lift in the same building. Supposing, in Bombay we had an office like the Empire State Building, with 120 stories, dozens of lifts may be travelling up and down, but men in one lift do not know who are in the other lifts, and the lifts can only move upwards and downwards, not horizontally . . . This is known as vertical mobility. It is the essence of a totalitarian party, that there shall be vertical mobility, freedom for opinion to move up and down but not sideways, not to circulate.

The freedom to move horizontally, free exchange of opinions vertically as well as horizontally that is what I call free mobility of opinion. If you meet a communist and ask him about opinions in his party on any point of controversy, he will not be able to give an answer. He can say what the party decision is, he will know the view of his cell, what the three tailors of Tooley Street have to say; beyond that he does not know, because he has no horizontal contacts.

#### FILTERING

Elections within the party are indirect. The cell members will elect the neighbourhood leaders, the neighbourhood leaders, the section leaders, the section leaders will elect the sector leaders, and the sector chiefs will choose the regional head, and so on . . .

There is a process of, what one might call, "*filtering*". Anyone whom the leaders do not like is apt to get filtered out. Such a method is very useful to a party organiser to maintain his grip on the organisation. If only I were anxious to have the Socialist Party under my control, I would straightaway adopt this method; because then all those whom I dislike, all those who will not say "yes" to what I say, would find no place in the higher layers of the party organisation.

The essence of a democratic party is free mobility of opinion, total freedom of circulation for opinions. In a democratic party, if it is truly democratic—(every party is not fully democratic for only an alert, intelligent and responsible membership can develop a wholly democratic party)—it is always the rank and file that shape the contours of policy and determine the actions of the party, and the leaders have to be responsible to the members. Such a responsiveness demands maximum, that is immediate contact, between the leaders and the followers. A democratic party therefore favours direct elections.

#### CONFORMITY vs TOLERANCE

Because of the fact that there are indirect elections under the Soviet system and such elections help the maintenance of control it is argued that the Soviet people are very fond of the Soviet system. The essence of the Soviet system is indirect elections, from echelon to echelon, from tier to tier. This makes it difficult for persons holding minority opinion to get elected. Indirect elections are the surest way of chocking minority views. With the filtering process, centralised direction becomes easy.

Where there are direct elections, where there is general mobility of opinion, where there is democratic functioning, the leaders will have to be responsible to the members. In a totalitarian party, it is the other way about. There is centralised direction: the rank and file are the agents, never the principal.

It is the essence of democratic party that there should be ideological *tolerance*, because its strength does not depend upon ideological uniformity. Not only there is tolerance in a democratic party, its decisions have a quality of *tentativeness*. There is no claim at, no need for, infallibility. Where there is free trade in ideas no policy or programme can claim to be absolute



and infallible. Where the approach is tentative, tolerance becomes easy; in a sense the quality of tentativeness generates tolerant attitude.

Ideological conformity becomes a necessity to a totalitarian party, because, the only way opposition, or even critics of government can find expression is by worming their way inside the party. The party becomes co-terminous with the state and all the irritations with, and opposition to, the government find reflections inside the party. Every chink in the party, therefore, inheres a threat to the stability of the state; in a democratic party differences of opinion have not that far-reaching consequences. It can, therefore, tolerate ideological differences. Nay, it will be opposed to the hammering out of enforced ideological unity. Such a unity, however, is a necessary instrument of a totalitarian party, because the moment differences are permitted, there is the danger of dissatisfied elements in the state drifting into the party and using the chink, exploiting the differences, for weakening the entire fabric of the state. The very logic that denies existence to more than one party in the state, leads to the denial of diversity of opinions inside the single party.

### KRONSTADT TEST

It has been the experience in the Soviet Union that only when a person or a group found himself or itself in a minority that he or it came forward with the demand that democratic rights of members must be protected. As a matter of fact, the real challenge to Communist power came, not from the *bourgeoisie*, not from the capitalists or imperialists (for their challenges were gallantly met and defeated), but from the ranks of workers. That was in 1921 when the Red seamen at Kronstadt, a naval base near Leningrad, rose in revolt. Alexander Berkman has described the Kronstadt uprising as "the *first* popular and independent attempt at Liberation from the yoke of State Socialism, all attempts made directly by the people, by the workers, soldiers and sailors themselves." What were the demands of the rebels? What ideals inspired them? Among the more important demands of the sailors and workers, who revolted in 1921, were: re-election of Soviets by secret voting with free preliminary agitation; freedom of speech to workers, peasants, anarchists and socialist parties; freedom of meetings

for trade unions and peasant associations; release of political prisoners of socialist parties; granting the peasant the right to do what he saw fit with land without employing hired labour, etc. There was no demand for right to exploit labour, there was no demand to extend civil liberties to the exploiting classes; all rights were asked only for those who are within the ambit of the exploited, the working people. Here was a demand for civil liberties, for secret ballot, for release of prisoners belonging to sister socialist parties, for permitting a peasant to do what he likes with his land so long as he did not hire labour. Such was the platform for which men had to pay with their lives in a proletarian state! No one in the ranks of the CPSU thought it worth his while to come forward and support these demands, not even Leon Trotsky! Trotsky was among those who denounced the Kronstadt uprising and helped to crush the revolt in a bath of blood. It is only when Trotsky found himself in a minority, that he became the champion of internal democracy.

An anarchist girl tried to kill Lenin. Though his life was spared the wound inflicted a lasting disability. As a reprisal for the shooting, 500 persons were summarily arrested and executed. India's great leader was also shot at and killed. But 500 men were not summarily arrested and shot! Whether that was wise or unwise, desirable or undesirable, is a question into which we will not go. What I am anxious to show you is that there is a certain *temper* of totalitarian state, and you must reckon with it. Totalitarianism may have its advantages, but a high price has to be paid for it. There is no point in arguing over that price when your turn comes to go to the scaffold! In the French revolution, the same thing happened. One after the other... Marat, Danton, Robespierre, Napoleon, came to power, and one after the other joined the procession of the exiled or the executed. The victim was wont to cry out bitterly against betrayal of the revolution. But when he was in power, it had not occurred to him that he was betraying the revolution himself!

When the Kronstadt sailors demanded civil liberties and democratic rights for the working people, not only the demands were rejected, but the protest was drowned in blood. This fact is important because various explanations are offered to account for the growing rigidity in the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. Trotsky, for instance, has held Stalin's leadership



responsible for the degeneration, for the oozing out of idealism from the revolution. The fact remains that the first vital assertion of democratic rights for the working people was put down by the Bolsheviks, when all the top leaders, including Lenin and Trotsky, were at the helm of affairs.

The trouble with the Communists is that facts mean little to them. One can argue with persons to whom facts are sacred, but it is not easy to argue with persons who formulate conclusions and search for facts and reasoning to support them, as a magnet draws iron-filings ! What does not fit in with conclusions is no fact !

Such, in brief, is the picture of a totalitarian state. It has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. Its advantages will become clear when we come to Economics of Socialism, where I shall show how a uni-party state has an advantage over a multi-party state. It will be my endeavour there to show that a uni-party state is not without its functional value. But you have to decide whether the functional importance of a one-party state outweighs the cultural, political, and other abiding gains of a multi-party state. That balance-sheet will have to be struck by each one of you and the decisions will have to be taken by you in the light of the experience you encounter.

## II

### HEIRS WITHOUT THE HERITAGE

The communists have consistently claimed to be the authentic heirs of the democratic tradition. The characteristic argument is well summed up below :

“Locke justified private property on the ground that whatever the individual removes out of the state of nature by the labour of his body and by the work of his hands is his individual property. Marx demonstrated that social production is leading to social ownership, in short, that the products of associated labour will become the property of the associated producers who labour with their bodies and work with their brain and hand. If Locke’s position is in the democratic tradition, then surely Marx’s scientifically established proposition is also within the democratic

tradition, since it represents the most consistent development of Locke's line of thought." (A. Landy : *Marxism and the Democratic Tradition*, 165.)

This is a typically misleading argument, where a part is equated with the whole. Apart from the socio-economic content of the democratic tradition, discussed above, there is the socio-political content of it—freedom for citizens, and limitations on the powers of the government—which the communists like Mr. Landy have always repudiated. The socio-political philosophy of the communists is authoritarian and no amount of verbal jugglery can hide that fact.

"Democracy," as E. F. M. Durbin pointed out in his significant book, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, "is essentially a matter of political method." And the communists have rejected the democratic *method* through a variety of arguments.

The argument of class state we have already discussed, and seen how it is valid only in certain circumstances. No socialist is worth his salt who does not ceaselessly strive to put positive content in the state, because that is to make the working people conscious of liberty and responsibility. The modern civilization has the task of carrying growing masses in all countries with it, to awaken them from their apathy, to train them for their participation in a richer and fuller life. Those masses have rarely been integrated before into a living civilization of liberty. The dead-weight of authoritarian tradition has to be lifted. That is the reason why Engels had said, "The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities, at the head of unconscious masses, is past. In order that masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required." And Marx had therefore exhorted the workers "to change not only conditions but to change yourselves, to qualify yourselves for rulership." And it is this way of thought that was enriched and carried forward by Rosa Luxemburg.

#### NO SHORT-CIRCUITING

Lenin sought to short-circuit the work. His dictatorship of the proletariat is not only for fighting against the forces of the *bourgeoisie*, but also against the stubborn habits of the people. "The dictatorship of the proletariat," writes Lenin, "is a persistent



struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and of tens of millions is a terrific force.” With this viewpoint Lenin has no use for democracy. As Leo Moulin bitinglly puts it, “As for Lenin, he places his confidence in the masses as long as they seem to be on his side.” (*Socialism of the West*, 64.)

This lack of trust in the people and faith only in oneself and one's understanding of social forces leads to the faulty formulation of “one class—one party.” “Where there are not several classes,” says Stalin, “there cannot be several parties, for a party is a part of a class.” Trotsky shared this view initially, but his exile taught him new lessons. His maturer criticism of the Stalinist theorem is, “It appears from this that classes are homogeneous; that the boundaries of classes are outlined sharply once for all; that the consciousness of a class strictly corresponds to its place in society.” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, 252.) As in life such clarity never exists no more than one party must exist for a class. To deprive a class of its right to have more than one party is to rob it of its freedom. So long as dictatorship of the proletariat is conceived as a one-party state it must end as a dictatorship *over* the proletariat.

#### OPPOSITION AND SOVEREIGNTY

This danger was noted, at the very start, by Rosa Luxemburg. In her study of the Russian Revolution she had said :

“Freedom for supporters of the government only, for the members of one party only—no matter how big its membership may be—is no freedom at all. *Freedom is always freedom for the man who thinks differently.* This contention does not spring from a fanatical love of abstract ‘justice,’ but from the fact that everything that is enlightening, healthy and purifying in political freedom derives from its independent character, and from the fact that freedom loses all its virtue when it becomes a privilege.

“The suppression of political life throughout the country must gradually cause the vitality of the Soviets themselves to decline. Without general elections, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech, life in every public institution slows down, becomes a caricature of itself, and bureau-

cracy rises as the only deciding factor. *No one can escape the working of this law.* Public life gradually dies, and a few dozen party leaders, with inexhaustible energy and limitless idealism, direct and rule . . . In the last resort cliquism develops a dictatorship, but not the dictatorship of the proletariat." (quoted in Paul Frolich : *Rosa Luxemburg*, 276-77.)

She believed in decisive action against property rights, but she was convinced that such action must be carried out in the context of general freedom and liberties.

Where men are trained in democratic traditions, that is in a positive state, where there is a habit of sending "heresy, of whatever kind, to Parliament, rather than to the hangman," social changes can take place by adjustments. In the name of social transformation to silence opposition is to rob people of their sovereignty. "To suppress the opposition," said Ferrero, "is to suppress the sovereignty of the people." And such suppression has a tendency to spread: from the suppression and execution of the Czar, you inevitably slide down to the suppression and assassination of Trotsky.

To safeguard against such tragic erosion of freedom is to build up a positive state and to develop political parties with democratic content. Only in the climate of democracy can the constructive tasks of socialism be adequately fulfilled. *The authoritarian habit of the masses is a lag to be overcome, not a lever to be operated.*

#### STATE AND POWER

Frederick Engels defined "power" and "state" in the following terms: "power, the outgrowth of society, but assuming supremacy over it and becoming more and more divorced from it is the state." This power was conceived of as class power. Expressed in other words, the view implies that in principle political power is vested in a class and distributed among the members of the class as a whole. Thus, in constructing a general theory of state, Marx and Engels disregarded power conflicts within a class. In a capitalist state, they assume a more or less equal distribution of power and the absence of other than purely temporary antagonisms over the use of power within the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*. Similarly, the proletarian state of their conception has power spread

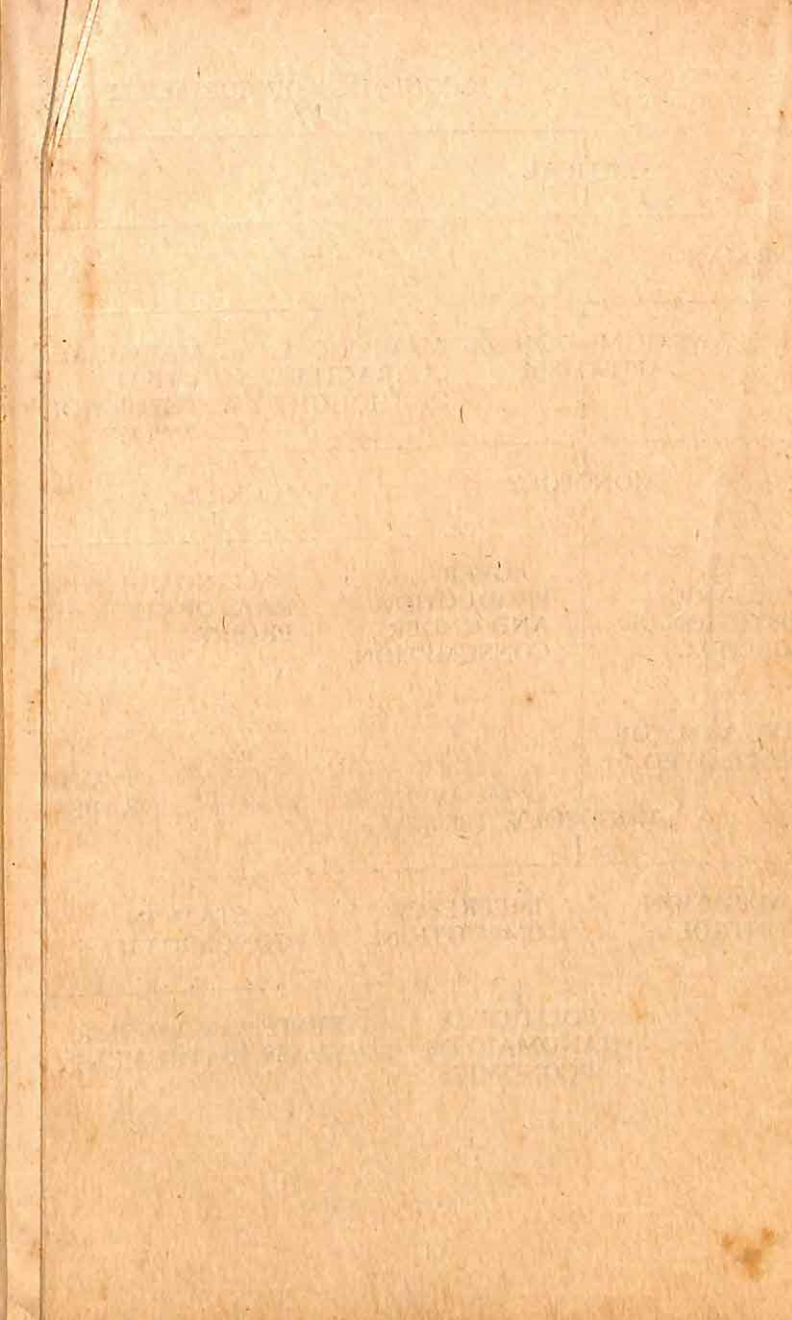


evenly through the proletariat, the new ruling class, and power conflicts within it are ignored, if not ruled out.

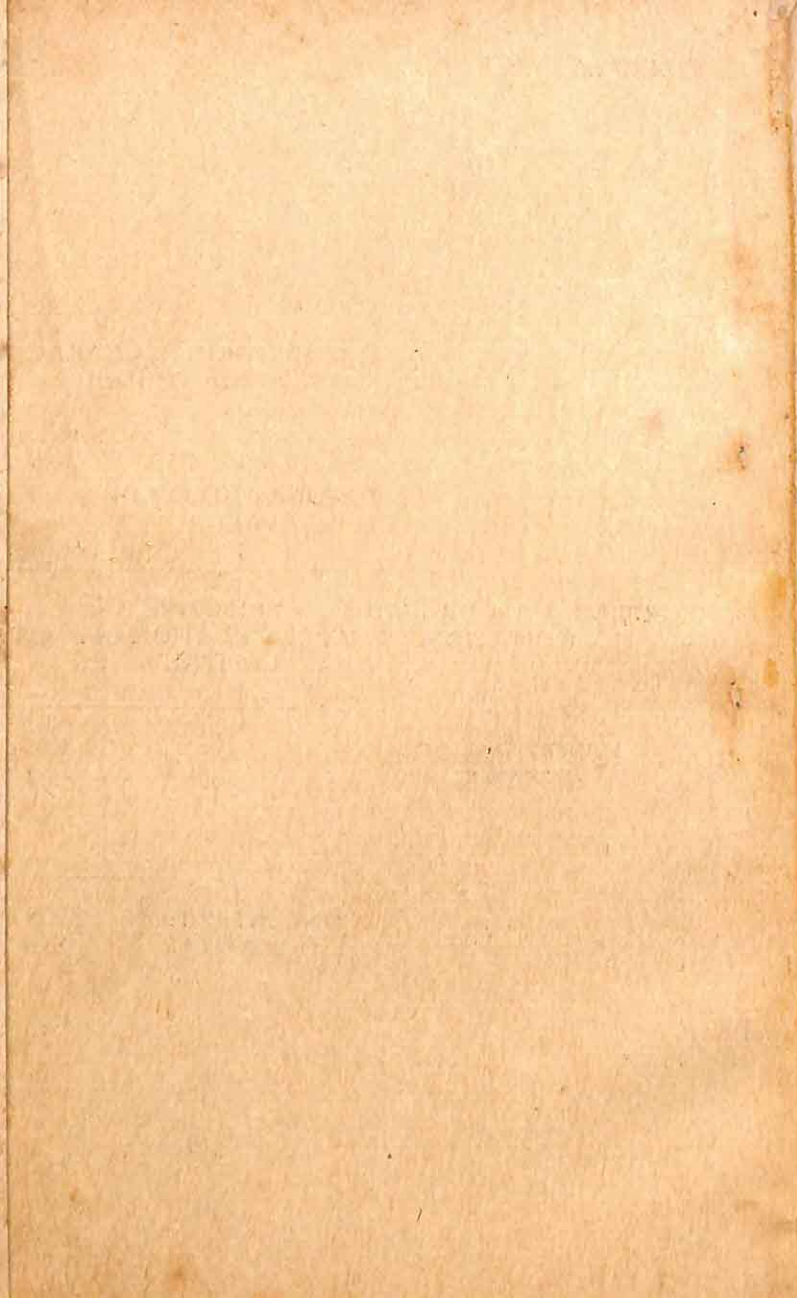
So much for theory. But when the fathers of scientific socialism applied their general theory of power to concrete historical situations, they had to deal with power conflicts *within* a class. Marx's analysis of the second French Republic and Engels' study of the peasant wars in Germany are two examples wherein empirical investigations into power relations proved unmistakably that the conception of polarisation of power and the slurring over of *intra*-class power conflicts was a dangerous over-simplification.

Historically, according to Engels, state power has been mostly class power but it has sometimes assumed "a position outside and above society." "At certain periods it occurs exceptionally," wrote Engels, "that the struggling classes balance each other so nearly that the public power gains a certain degree of independence by posing as mediator between them." He, however, failed to underscore the fact that in a democratic state, state power has a growing tendency to become the mediator and assume "a position outside and above society," because the tensions of a democratic society push power in that position.

Failure to provide for *intra*-class power conflicts and exclusively confining attention of *inter*-class conflicts weakened the political theory of the founders of Marxism. It is further removed from realities by the failure to bring into focus the effects of democratic tensions on alignment of power-relations in a state. The Marxian theory of state therefore is more of an "ideal", abstract conception rather than a concrete, historically grounded theorem (for a fuller discussion of this line of thought, *ref.* Sherman H. M. Chang, *The Marxian Theory of the State*).







## Lecture V

# ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM

Will you refer to Chart IV that has just been distributed to you? You will find therein that two main divisions are made of our subject matter: *critical* and *constructive*. The analysis of capitalism, an understanding of its dynamics that would enable the socialists to overthrow capitalism and come to power, is the *critical* part of the economics of socialism. The problems that face socialists on the assumption of power, the economic organisation of a socialist society or of a society moving to that goal, are discussed under the *constructive* aspect of the economics of socialism. One is concerned with the analysis of the existing order, the other seeks elaboration of blue-prints of the new order.

Karl Marx considered it utopian to describe or even discuss socialist society until socialist economy had emerged. So long as we are living within the framework of capitalist economy, so long as our lives are pressed and shaped by capitalist social order, all that we can do, realistically and scientifically, is to analyse the society that encompasses us, discuss its sources of strength and weakness, and uncover the contradictions that push it to its destruction. The proper function of a scientific socialist was therefore believed to be *critical*; *constructive* thinking was discouraged as utopian adventure, a term of great disdain in Marxist vocabulary!

However wise or otherwise such a stand may have been in the days of Marx, in our times it is wholly untenable. We are living in a historical period where a part of the world is capitalist and another part is socialist. We have before us the efforts of three decades of socialist experiment in the Soviet Union. Today, *constructive* thinking, analysis of the problems that face a socialist state, is as relevant and necessary as *critical* thinking was in the days of Marx. It is a matter of profound regret that the Soviet Union and its satellites do not permit enquiries nor provide statistical and other data that would enable us to judge



the constructive problems in a truly critical spirit. However difficult the work, it needs to be essayed.

### UNFORTUNATE TRADITION

Marx had confined his attention, in 4,000 pages of his *magnum opus*, to the problems of capitalist economy. The tallest among the socialists paid the tribute of exclusive pre-occupation with the problems of capitalism to his class enemies: he had neither the time nor interest to consider the problems of socialist economy. This tradition has been kept up by his followers. No one, until Marshal Tito dramatically posed the issue, had thought it possible that within the family of socialist nations there would be aggression, war, violence: that whole continent had remained undiscovered.

New problems began to be considered only after World War I, when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, and the Social Democrats in Germany and the Labourites in Britain became the dominant political forces in their respective countries. Socialist thought then had to be fertilised with new awareness and fresh approaches. In Germany, the Socialisation Commission did pioneer work, and in Britain the Webbs' *Constitution for Socialist Britain* helped to give a new orientation to the policy of the Labour Party and to socialist thought in general.

In critical thought, in Britain and the Scandinavian countries, the non-Marxist or the Fabian approach has exercised greater influence than the Marxian. It is therefore necessary to consider both the approaches. We shall begin our discussion with the Marxian analysis.

(In this connection the best popular books, that I can recommend, are John Strachey's *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* and Paul N. Sweezy's *The Theory of Capitalist Development*. Both the books provide a clear analysis of the basic economic ideas of Marx. An erudite and interesting application of Marxian economics to a highly developed country is Lewis Corey's *Decay of American Capitalism*. The book has unfortunately dated.)

### HISTORICITY OF MARX

The first fact that needs to be noted is the historical character of Marxian thought. It means two things: the thought is shaped

by historical data, and it is not static, logic-bound, but four-dimensional, that is moving and changing in accordance with the impress of evolving practice. It was not enough to desire the collapse of the prevailing inequitable society, "One must know in obedience to what laws they come into being, in order to know how to act within the framework of these laws, since to act against them deliberately or not, in blind ignorance of the causes and character, would be a futile and suicidal act and would, by creating chaos, defeat and demoralise the revolutionary class, and so prolong the existing agony." (Marx.)

His analysis was thus eminently *practical*—it was shaped by experience and sharpened for practical use.

Such an analysis has to be both historical and sociological, it cannot remain formally logical. How he converted logical categories into historical-cum-sociological ideas may be seen by uncovering the meaning of any one of his terms. *Labour*, for instance. It was no longer an undifferentiated idea, it was given social and historical setting. It is not the labour of free worker, working for himself. It now becomes the labour of a person producing a commodity for another person, where the tools are owned by man of capital. "*Political Economy* is no longer a science of commodities, and science of labour only indirectly, and in an abstract and one-sided manner. It becomes a direct science of social labour, of the productive force of that labour, of their development and afterwards their enslavement of the fixed forms of the production relations prevailing in present day bourgeois society and finally of the emancipation of the productive forces inherent in present society by the revolutionary action of the proletarian class." (Karl Korsch : *Marx*, 127.)

What are the laws of motion of capitalism? To understand them aright it is useful to familiarise ourselves with the Marxian categories. The superstructure of Marxian thought is built upon the foundation of the labour theory of value. That labour is the sole source of wealth is the corner-stone on which Marx's mansion of thought, housing his penetrating criticism of capitalism, is raised.

To this subject Marx devoted thousands of pages of writing. No summary can therefore do him justice, for none can reproduce the warmth, the passion and profundities of the original.



## LABOUR THEORY

The essence of the Labour Theory of Value is that labour is the sole creative factor of production. Only by combining it with other factors—land and labour, or labour and capital but never land and capital—can production ensue. Of the four factors of production three are sterile, that is, they are capable of reproducing only what is put in them. It is labour and labour alone that is capable of reproducing something over and above its cost. That is so because of a certain duality in labour.

Everything has a price. A factor of production costs something and it yields in production its own cost. What is the cost of labour? There is a fundamental divergence between the cost of labour and the value of labour's output. The price of labour is the wages paid to the worker to keep himself alive and efficient, while the price of what is produced by labour is the value of labour power that is put in. The cost of a labourer and the worth of his labour can be disassociated. "Thus the real position is that the wage worker sells his labour power to the capitalist, while the capitalist sells the wage workers' labour power embodied in a commodity." (Strachey: *op. cit.*, 179.) The capitalist gets the price of the commodity, embodying worker's labour power, while he pays the worker only for his labour, that is, for his upkeep. This distinction, the schism in the heart of labour, shapes the Labour Theory of Value.

## THE MARXIAN CATEGORIES

Suppose a worker needs six hours' work to maintain himself. He will then have to be paid that much. But under capitalism increasingly fewer workers are able to work on their own; they need employment. The employer will make the worker work longer than six hours, and having paid him for his upkeep all additional output accrues to the employer as profit.

If the worker works for ten hours, his efforts for four hours constitute profit for the employer. As value is socially necessary labour time and nothing else, profit is nothing but unpaid labour or *surplus value*. There is no fraud in this. The worker is given his *price*, and the employer is entitled to cash the labour power he has thus purchased. The difference arises from the

socially advantageous position that the employer enjoys, a position that enables him to control the means of production.

The worker only gets what he needs for maintenance, as Lassalle's iron law of wages had postulated. All surplus labour goes to the employer.

Moreover, it is not difficult to see that the value of labour will be habitually less than the value of the labour power. How is it that the workers are now forced to sell their very ability to work instead of selling, as they used to, their actually completed labours, embodied in commodities? It is because they have lost their access to the indispensable means of production. These means of production have become the effective monopoly, not, it is true, of any one person, but of the capitalist or the employing class. The iron necessity for workers to work for employers, instead of for themselves, has arisen because of this divorce between the workers and the needed means of production. Hence, in the last analysis, it is an ever-tightening monopoly of the means of production which enables the capitalist employers to pay the wage workers less than the value of their labour; which enables the employers to pay workers no more than the value of their labour power, as determined by the necessity of maintaining these workers' strength and efficiency.

### SURPLUS VALUE

As all value is created by the labour of human beings, value, according to persons for reasons other than their work, must have been taken from persons whose work did create it. This is best seen in the case of a *rentier* who draws dividend, without doing a stroke of work. Marx coined the phrase, surplus value, to define such transferred value. It is a wider, more inclusive, term than profit; it covers every kind of income receivable for any reason other than performance of work.

Marx points out that capitalist production is carried on exclusively for the production of surplus value. "The product in which the capitalist is really interested is not the tangible product itself, but the excess of the value of the product over the value of capital assimilated in it." (*Capital*, Vol. III, p. 54.)

The effort of a capitalist is therefore to get more and more out of a worker through improving his efficiency, by providing



better tools and technique, but oftener by putting extra strain on him and maintaining or lowering his wages and thereby widening the margin between what is paid and what is got out of a labourer. That is the law of exploitation, which continuously seeks to reduce the share of workers, while striving to improve efficiency and increasing the productive worth of his labour, so that a worker is strained from both the ends. Accumulation of capital is merely the obverse of the law of exploitation.

### LAW OF EXPLOITATION

Suppose I have a thousand workers employed under me. From every worker every day I extract two rupees. As a result, every day I shall be extracting Rs. 2,000. If they work 25 days in a month, I shall be drawing profits to the tune of Rs. 50,000. At the end of the year I shall have six hundred thousand. These six lakhs of rupees I shall use either for hiring more workers and that way draw additional surplus value and then instead of extracting 2,000 rupees per day I shall be extracting 4,000 rupees per day, or I might decide that I shall give better machinery to the workers, better machinery which will enable the workers to produce more, which might put higher strain or improve the efficiency of the worker, which would enable me to reduce the labour time needed to maintain the worker.

Improvement of machinery means breaking down the process of work. The less complicated a machine, the greater is the initiative a worker has to exercise. On a handloom, a worker has to operate practically every part of the tool; he has to bring about constantly an intelligent adjustment between the crude machine, that is, the loom, and his own skill. But in a highly mechanised weaving machine, where a worker is able to operate sixteen automatic looms at a time, his work becomes increasingly monotonous. This dissociation between the worker and his work, this dissociation between the worker and his skill, has been fully described by Marx in his great book *The Capital*. It is a tragedy that few Marxists ever refer to this aspect of his teachings. Marx has called this *self-alienation of labour*. The labourer gets alienated from himself. Why is the capitalist system monstrous? Because, it brings about alienation of man from himself, alienation of men from soil and nature and alienation of man from man.

This alienation of man from himself is the very essence of capitalist development. Accumulation of capital is used for fabricating better and better tools, which yield higher and higher profits, need more and more investment of capital. As capital is sterile, the investments only yield what is invested. You can earn more only through hiring workers. For instance, with a handloom a worker may be able to produce just one *sari* a day; with a powerloom he can produce three to four *saris* a day; with automatic looms a worker produces probably 40 *saris* a day. One *sari* gives you a profit of one rupee. So with an automatic loom, the owner gets 40 rupees profit per day per worker. This intensification of work is linked up therefore with the theory of exploitation on one side and with the law of accumulation of capital on the other.

#### ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

What is primitive accumulation of capital? It is the manner in which capital is accumulated in the early days of capitalist development. Once capitalist development has taken place, once economic life has been built up, there are many ways of developing or accumulating capital. As a matter of fact, some of the industrially advanced countries today suffer from a glut of capital.

Recently Colin Clark carried out an estimate of the world's needs and resources of capital (*Fortune Magazine*, July 1950). His estimate for 1960 shows that of the thirty-six countries surveyed by him twenty-five countries will have an excess of savings available for export while only eleven countries would be short of capital and would need to import it from outside. But these eleven countries account for a population of 1,439 millions as against the population of the other twenty-five countries, which in 1950 adds upto 840 millions. In Asia and Africa, where scarcity of capital is great and where the scarcity is likely to continue for another generation or more, the present phase of accumulation of capital is primitive.

How is primitive accumulation of capital achieved? How was it brought about in industrially developed countries in the last century or earlier? How is the primitive accumulation of capital being achieved in our country?

There are, broadly speaking, two recognised ways of primitive



accumulation of capital. One, by uprooting peasants from the land. In England, for instance, the beginning of capitalism has always been traced to the *enclosure movement*, when land was encroached upon by the landlords and the peasants were driven out. It is this process of throwing out peasants that made workers available for factories. Under capitalism conditions in the city are bad; conditions in factory are worse; a worker is never attracted to a factory, he has to be pushed to it. What is it that pushes a man from the village, from the familiar surroundings in which he was born, in which he was brought up? What is it that compels him to flee the hearth and the home and seek livelihood elsewhere?—*Enforced starvation*. By taking away his land, by depriving him of his livelihood in the village, a farm labourer is forced to become a factory hand. So some form of enclosure movement always accompanies a process of capital accumulation and industrialization.

The other traditional method is through the creation of a reserve army of unemployed. The number of workers must always exceed the jobs available. Unless workers press on jobs, wages would rise and surplus value would be lowered and might even disappear. To maintain the capitalist's primacy, to enable him to accumulate capital and thereby set up new factories, it is necessary to have workmen run after jobs rather than jobs serenade workers.

An employer can get his way only when there are many men running after a few jobs. Otherwise, it is the worker who is likely to dictate the terms. If, therefore, the law of exploitation is to operate, it is necessary to have more men than there are jobs available, which means there must always be a reserve army of unemployed workmen. It is the *sine qua non* of the law of exploitation. It will cease to operate if the wages of the worker come up to the value of his product. The contradictions within the heart of labour would then be stilled. There will be a balance and an equipoise, if this reserve army of labour disappears. It is, therefore, necessary for the primitive accumulation of capital that there should be a simultaneous process of uprooting of peasant and of mobilisation or creation of a reserve army of labour.

In our country these rules have been followed. In the past fifty years the number of landless labourers has sharply increased. Between 1911 and 1931 the number of labourers per thousand

cultivators increased from 254 to 417. There is a progressive divorce of the peasant from his land, and thereby an inexorable pull is exerted on him to drift to towns and cities. In factories from 1870 to 1920, there was crude exploitation of labour. Reports of Labour Inquiry Committees have given details of the atrociously long hours of work and low wages as also of the rugged outlook of the *entrepreneurs*. [For a succinct account of these facts ref. D. H. Buchanan : *Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*.]

(That the exploitation of labour has not ceased is ably brought out in the unpublished book, *Trends of Capitalist Concentration in India*, of S. L. Sharma of the Lucknow University.)

### ORGANIC COMPOSITION

Next, we come to the question of organic composition of capital: Capital is divided, in normal *parlance*, into fixed capital and working capital. If you want to run a shop you must invest some money in the stock, and then there will be recurring expenses such as rent, electricity, etc. Marx, however, made a different distinction. He divided capital into constant capital and variable capital. Constant capital includes not only what is generally known as fixed capital, but that part of the working capital which is used for buying raw materials. If you have a textile mill, not only must you invest, say, Rs. 40,00,000 in building, plant and machinery, but you must buy cotton, coal or electricity, dye-stuffs from day to day. The first is fixed capital, the second is part of the working capital. You buy cotton, produce cloth, buy cotton again and so on. The capital keeps rotating. The fixed capital does not rotate so fast. It usually completes a rotation in 40 years, while the working capital used for buying raw materials, and paying workers rotates once a month. The rate of rotation of these capitals are very different. Marx argues that these divisions hide the working of capitalist economy. By lumping together capital used to buy raw materials and capital used to pay wages the source of profits gets concealed. It was only by separating, from the rest of the capital, the capital used to pay wages that the essential nature of the system gets revealed.

Part of the working capital used for buying raw materials must be treated as constant capital, because it adds no extra value to the final product. Raw cotton adds only the value



paid for it in the textiles produced. Only human labour adds more than its price—the wages paid. Hence, that portion of capital used for paying out wages, *i.e.*, the *variable capital*, alone is fecund.

The Law of Organic Development of Capital says that as capitalist development proceeds, as production becomes more mechanised, that is, more roundabout, more and more would be spent on constant capital and less and less on variable capital. For instance, where production is carried on by handlooms, substantial portion of the capital invested will be spent on giving wages to workmen. Very little will be spent on machinery. In a modern mill of automatic looms, only a small portion of capital invested will be spent on labour, much more on plant and machinery. Therefore, with the development of economic life, with the improvement in technique of production, the proportion of variable capital will decrease in comparison with constant capital. The proportion between constant and variable capital ultimately determines the organic composition of capital.

Only variable capital yields surplus value. But a capitalist is not concerned with the rate of surplus value *per se*, he is interested in the rate of profit earned by him on his total investments. The distinction between constant and variable capital is unreal to a capitalist. The rate of profit is linked up with the rate of surplus value. Unless the rate of surplus value (or of exploitation) is high, the rate of profit must fall. What is the relationship of the rate of profit with the rate of surplus value? The rate of profit must equal the rate of surplus value multiplied by the proportion of variable to total capital employed by a firm—

$$p = sv \times \frac{V}{C}$$

—when the proportion of variable capital to total capital is high, surplus value will be large and the rate of profit high.

### THE GREAT CONTRADICTION

This brings us to what critics of Marx have called “the great contradiction” in Marxian thought. The law of exploitation demands that there should be more and more of human

labour and less and less of constant capital, if sufficient surplus value is to be extracted; while the law of organic development of capital demands that capitalist expansion is possible only when there is a constantly decreasing variable capital and constantly increasing constant capital. These two laws create an unbalance and Marx has devoted the third volume of his *Capital* to its resolution. How does Marx overcome the contradiction? If the rate of profit varies directly with the proportion of variable to total capital, domestic factory establishments, that is, those relying on labour power and only incidentally on machinery and plants, would make higher profits, while those with lower ratio, more machines and less men, would have a low rate of profit—a statement in flat contradiction with known facts. And if the rate of profit falls, why do capitalists insist on having more and more machines, why do they seek organic development of capital?

Firstly, Marx pointed out the rate of profit is not decided factory-wise. The profit made by a particular firm is not all retained by the firm. The original lump of profit or surplus value, consisting of the difference between what is paid to the workers and what they add to the value of the product in the course of their work upon it, cannot be retained by the particular firm which makes it. On the contrary, the force of competition compels capitalist firms to pool this amount of profit or surplus value with all of their competitors throughout the productive system. And then from this pool each particular firm is able to draw out the amount which will give it an average percentage of profit on its total capital. Higher than average profit would draw fresh capital and attract competitors and thus bring down the rate of profit; less than average profit would drive away capital and reduce competition and thus push up profit.

It is further obvious that a growth of the constant capital in proportion to the variable capital used by the whole system must mean, other things being equal, a decline in the rate of profit. The growth of the constant capital in proportion to the variable capital is only another way of expressing the development of technique of production. The progress of capital is therefore accompanied by a *falling rate of profit*.

The effects of the falling *rate* of profit, however, can be overcome by increasing the amount of capital and thus raising the *quantum* of profit. The capitalists can find a compensation



for the ever-falling *rate* of profit in an ever-growing *amount* of profit secured by an ever-growing *total* capital.

"We see, then, that in spite of the progressive fall of the rate of profit, there may be an absolute increase of the number of labourers employed by capital, an absolute increase of the labour set in motion by it, an absolute increase of the mass of surplus labour absorbed, a resulting absolute increase of the produced surplus value and consequently a resulting absolute increase of the mass of produced profit. And this increase may be progressive. And it *may* not only be so. On the basis of capitalist production, it *must* be so, aside from temporary fluctuations. The capitalist process of production is essentially a process of accumulation." (*Capital*, Vol. III, 255.)

This Marx has called the *two-faced law*: Janus-like because it decrees that a *falling rate* of profit and the *rising amount* of profit are the characteristics of a capitalist economy.

The two-faced law operates only so long as capital accumulates fast enough to negative the falling rate of profit. As Marx put it mathematically: "In order that the mass of profit made at a declining rate of profit may remain the same as before, the multiplier indicating the growth of the total capital must be equal to the divisor indicating the fall of the rate of profit." (*Capital*, Vol. III, 260.)

The capitalist order can survive only through a process of frenzied accumulation. Only so long as the two-faced law operates is capitalism able to stave off a crisis. The ratio of variable capital (V) to total capital (C) must steadily fall. Its effects can be overcome only by raising C fast enough to make up for the fall in the *rate* of profit by an absolute increase in the *amount* of profit. This means that constant capital must grow persistently. Capitalism to survive must make its production increasingly roundabout. Constant capital can grow only by accumulating more and more capital. The increased production must be sucked up for machines, and more machines, and not be used for men who operate them. That is the price of keeping up the capitalist economy in running order.

The implications of this gluttonous need for constant capital will be made clear a little later.

## TENDENCY TO MONOPOLY

You have heard of *Matsya Nyaya*. A big fish lives on small fish. Under capitalism too this law operates. There is a constant pressure in favour of the emergence of a monopoly. And there are special reasons for it. A monopoly permits the monopolist, if not to determine his cost, at least to determine his selling price. Profit is ultimately the difference between price realised and the cost paid. If you can determine either your costs or your selling price, you can augment your profit; if you can manipulate both, your profits would be maximised. A monopolist is sometimes able to influence his costs, but more often he is able to control the selling price of his products or services.

The Sassoons of Bombay provide an illuminating case-study of the two-way monopoly. In 1832, David Sassoon came to Bombay from Baghdad. Ere long, he engaged himself in the export of opium and ultimately established a monopoly of the export. If he was just a clever man, probably he would have stopped there. If he was just a Jew, probably he would not have gone further. But being a clever Jew, he sent his son, Edward, to China. There in Shanghai and Hong Kong, he slowly built up a monopoly of the import of opium. The father had a monopoly of export, the son had a monopoly of import, and out of that the fabulous wealth of the Sassoons was minted: All the Sassoon Textile Mills in Bombay—the Edward Sassoon group as well as the David Sassoon group—the Sassoon Dock (the first floating dock in the East), the Sassoon Bank and a variety of other industrial ventures were financed from these profits. The story of the fabulous Sassoons is all the more fascinating to us because of the contributions of the family to the making of our great city. The son of Edward Sassoon married a daughter of the Rothschilds, the foremost banker of Europe. The third generation of the Sassoons settled in England, married into the aristocracy, the sons entered the House of Commons and blossomed into accomplished gentlemen. Siegfried Sassoon became a famous fox-hunting poet, Phillip Sassoon became the Secretary for Air in a Conservative Government. Victor Sassoon tended the family fortune and also became a king of the turf. This process of the first generation avidly accumulating capital, the second generation organising industry, marrying into aris-



ocracy and the third generation entering politics and writing poems, doting on sports and theatres and generally squandering the fortune is also a well-known law, which probably your grandmother has understood better than Karl Marx, as you must have learnt from experience !

### WHO OWNS INDIA ?

What are the characteristics of monopoly ? Concentration of capital. I would like to invite your attention to a little book I have just published, *Who Owns India ?* I have tried there to describe the details of concentration of capital and concentration of control. These are two different things, because with the development of joint stock company it is possible to have control without ownership. Capitalism has discovered a method whereby control has been divorced from ownership. You may own a share, but you do not control the factory. You may control a mill but you need not own all the shares. The divorce between control and ownership is, you might say, one of the magical achievements of capitalism. And, as a matter of fact, it was the development of the joint stock companies that led Bernstein and others to indulge in their revisionist dreams.

The concentration of capital therefore means more and more capital in the hands of fewer and fewer persons. Concentration of control means that though ownership may be distributed the control is gathered up in a few hands. For instance, the Indian Chamber of Commerce has suggested that there are 20 lakhs of shareholders in India, that India's industrial economy is ultimately owned and operated by 2,000,000 shareholders, and the average share-holding does not exceed Rs. 20,000. The suggestion is that there is a sort of democracy of shareholders, which ultimately runs our industries, and that is the reason, as you must have noticed, why industrialists never talk in their own name but always in the name of the shareholders. If there is a strike, the shareholders stand to lose; if there is increased taxation it is deemed to hurt the shareholders: it is always the shareholders or the consumers who are affected, never the industrialists !

While the bulk of the shares is distributed among a number of scattered shareholders, enough shares are held by the *entre-*

*preneurs* to assure their control. The following table is at once relevant and revealing:

Group of Shares	<i>Advance Mill</i>		<i>Tata Mill</i>		<i>Tata Hydro-Elec.</i>	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
1-25	93.6	40.0	79.0	14.1	82.0	24.2
26-50	3.6	11.0	10.5	8.1	10.0	12.1
51-75	0.9	4.6	3.3	4.1	2.2	4.5
76-100	0.6	4.7	3.3	6.4	2.1	6.2
101-150	0.4	3.2	1.4	3.3	1.4	5.4
150 and over	0.9	36.5	2.4	64.0	2.2	48.33

A: percentage of shareholders. B: percentage of shares issued.

The shape of the pyramid is interesting. The tapering apex carries a load of ownership and thereby doubly assures its control.

I have shown in my book that when you analyse the structure of control, you find 3,728 directorships of 500 key industrial and financial concerns distributed among 1,013 directors; when you break up these thousand men holding 3,700 directorships you find that over 800 directorships are in the hands of just *twenty* men. These twenty tycoons through their control of banks, insurance companies, through their association with big managing agency firms, like the Tatas and the Birlas, are able to control and determine the pace, the tempo, the character of our industrial economy.

I do not deny the fact that there are twenty lakhs of shareholders. But my contention is that the shareholders are powerless and real authority and initiative reside in the twenty tycoons.

Concentration of capital or ownership and the concentration of control are two distinct phenomena, and the two can be separated. Such a divorce is the essence of modern capitalism and it also becomes the *raison d'être* of socialism.

#### IMPERFECT COMPETITION

Those of you who are students of economics are probably aware of Mrs. Robinson's famous book, *The Theory of Imperfect Competition*. The essence of competition, as was pointed out by Adam Smith, is that no one is so powerful as to foresee, much less to control, the results of competition. While many



compete, none is strong enough to influence the result. Competition is meaningful only when the participants compete on equal terms. Supposing you are appearing in an examination; each one of you have equal terms of competition. But if one of you is able to influence the examiner, because of his social position or economic privilege, and succeeds in getting the question paper beforehand, the competition becomes not merely imperfect but unfair. When tea plantations were developed in India in the last century British military men were able to get special facilities. Political power yielded economic advantage and the competition became scandalously imperfect. As Dr. Buchanan has pointed out: "Of 45 large lots of seed distributed by a government station in 1861, over half or 23 lots went to Europeans with military titles, ranging from Captain to General; ten lots went to Europeans who gave no titles, three lots to as many companies; while only nine lots went to named Indians, five were very small. Twenty unnamed Europeans also received small portions but as a group they received more than 301 natives together." (*The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, p. 58.)

A monopolist is able to influence a decision by controlling the cost and/or the price end, either the purchasing end, or the selling end. He is thus able to influence the market. Monopoly of means of production in the hands of capitalist robs labour of the elasticity of its supply. These and other factors lead to a state of imperfect competition. Under capitalism there is a persistent, irresistible effort on the part of the *entrepreneurs* to build up monopolies, to raise profits and thereby make competition imperfect.

### CONTRADICTIONS

The laws of motion of capitalism, briefly outlined above, uncover ineluctable contradictions in the heart of capitalism.

An employer, in search of profit, pays as little as possible to workers, and beats down the price of raw materials to the minimum. Simultaneously he expands production. But a product must be sold before profit in it is realised. To sell it there must be a buyer, not just any person but a buyer with the means to make the demand effective. The buyers ultimately are workers, peasants, clerks, teachers. If their wages are kept

low, a stage will be reached where there will be too much production and too little purchasing power, too much to sell and not enough buyers. This leads to a crisis of under-consumption.

We have already discussed the conflict between the law of exploitation where surplus value is based upon the number of workers employed and the rate of profit depends on the relation of the capital spent on wages to the total capital invested in an enterprise or an economy, and the law of organic composition of capital where production becomes more and more roundabout, and the proportion of variable capital to total capital falls. The two-faced law discussed earlier also inheres a crisis. More roundabout production must lead, at some stage, to increased final output of consumable goods. That increase threatens the working of capitalism because it can be taken off the market only if the share of the workers in the national income is growing, and, if it grows, accumulation of capital is threatened and that throws out of gear the two-faced law. There is thus a contradiction between capitalism's tendency to increase production and its need to accumulate capital.

These and other contradictions that Marx uncovered showed that capitalism was prone to crisis. Economic crises, periodical depressions, are the means whereby the unbalance of capitalist development is set right. The development is never in a straight line, it is ever a zig-zag, up and down. The wave-like motion, where a development is followed by a breakdown, which in its turn is followed by a fresh development is the dominant characteristic of capitalism.

### CRISES

The contradictions of capitalism clutter its path with crises. Some crises are temporary; they are overcome and the earlier unbalance is corrected and progress is resumed. But ultimately a stage is reached where a crisis proves to be the *breakdown crisis*, where there is no way out within the framework of capitalism.

Marx saw the revolution at the corner because he tended to view every crisis as the breakdown crisis. For him a crisis meant the birth-pangs of revolution. He forgot that in social affairs every birth-pang does not lead to birth !

If every crisis is not the breakdown crisis, when does that



final crisis emerge? Marx is not very consistent in giving the answer. He argued sometimes that society changes only when a new mode of production has developed. Slave-owning society yielded place to feudal social order only when serf labour had established its productive superiority over slave labour. Feudalism was superseded by capitalism when the new mode of factory production had already established its primacy. A revolution does not precede a change in economic order, but follows or legitimises the change that has taken place. A revolution is not a trailer but an epilogue. Revolution takes place where there is divergence between economic developments and political arrangements. When economic life is organised on socialised basis, through divorce of ownership and control and the concentration of control in a few hands mostly belonging to the managerial class, and the political arrangement remain capitalist, an explosion becomes inevitable. The forces of production outgrow the political integument and then "integument is burst asunder and the expropriators are expropriated."

But Marx has also envisaged the possibility of the proletarians coming to power earlier. It is from this premise that Lenin developed his theory of the snapping of the weakest link. Revolution occurs not in the most developed capitalist countries, but less developed countries like Russia and China.

This duality in Marxian conclusions has led to unending difficulties and given rise to conflicting schools, each claiming to be the authentic exponent of Marxism.

Marxian economic analysis is thus a dynamic process, it moves through history and becomes a mighty force of social change. What Marx said of philosophy applies to economics also. Those who master his laws of motion of capitalist development need no longer interpret economic life, they are equipped and inspired to change it. Marxian economic ideas are therefore weapons for the armoury of social revolution.

## II

### FABIANISM

The Fabians are modest. Marx took 4,000 pages to picture his scheme of thought. The Fabians have written only one

little book of 200 pages. Every ten years they added some 30 pages. This Fabian tortoise, however, hopes to beat the Marxian hare !

You will recollect that I laid great emphasis on the historical character of Marxian thought. It was my endeavour to show to you that Marxian thought is conditioned by, and is a product of history. Fabianism, on the other hand, is more analytical than historical. It has no theory of state as such, no profound philosophy of history. The founders of Fabianism agreed on a *corpus* of ideas in so far as it applied to economic life. But in other matters they held dissimilar views. Bernard Shaw, with his philosophy of emergent evolution, the erudite yet stolid Webbs, Graham Wallace with his profound insight into psychology of politics, Annie Besant, a remarkable yet intractable character—these are among the founders of Fabianism. Though their achievements were great, they had produced no common, integrated thought structure. There was no effort, on the part of anyone of them, to offer an analysis that would envelop, as in Marx, the entire processes of human thought.

Fabianism had neither that ambition, nor has it such achievements to its credit. Fabianism is satisfied with elaborating a *corpus* of ideas about a sound economic policy for a community. Outside that *corpus*, the founders of Fabianism held a variety of opinions.

#### ANALYTICAL THOUGHT

What are the outstanding characteristics of Fabianism ? The first characteristic to which attention is easily drawn is the analytical nature of their thought. If you read the *Fabian Essays*, you will find that only one chapter is devoted to historical view which is contributed by Sidney Webb. Sidney Webb was one of those who believed in selecting a small subject, analysing it thoroughly, mastering it fully, preparing a volume on it, which would leave no source of reference untapped and which would be difficult of being superseded. His book on *Local Governments in England* or on the *Trade Union Movement in England*, Mrs. Webb's monumental study of the *Poor Laws in England* deal with certain facets of social life, and within their limited sphere the books give us the last word. The canvas is limited, but



the colours are complete. Webbs never dreamt, at least not till the evening of their life, of venturing upon those great voyages of thought that were so common with Marx. Whether you take Marx's book on *Capital*, on *German Ideology*, his writings on philosophy, the various topical tracts such as the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*; *Civil Wars in France*, that he wrote, you invariably find about them an intellectual audacity, which in a lesser man would have become ridiculous. Webbs never showed such intellectual daring. Even their great study of the *Soviet Communism*, the coping stone of their intellectual edifice, is essentially pedestrian, not in its achievement but in its conception. Sidney Webb who began his life as a civil servant remained to the end a civil servant *par excellence*, meticulous in details, profound as an adviser, incapable, as was proved when he became the Colonial Secretary in the first Labour Government, of initiating anything, of executing anything on a grand scale. In his historical chapter contributed to the *Fabian Essays* you will find that there is no effort at wide, sweeping generalisations; the historical chapter provides merely the barest framework for the rest of the analysis.

Then we come to the Marginal Utility Theory of Value. Here, I would like to invite your attention to a fact that I did not bring to your notice earlier, because it would have been premature to do so. The Labour Theory of Value explains, or at least helps us to understand, the laws of motion of capitalism. You will recollect that the Labour Theory of Value enabled us to understand the law of exploitation, the law of primitive accumulation of capital, as also the law of organic composition of capital,—the laws which ultimately provide the key to the contradictions that exist within the bosom of the capitalist system and that must ultimately encompass its doom. But the Labour Theory of Value breaks down completely, when you come to handle the day-to-day problems of economic life. The problems of the market-place cannot be solved by the Labour Theory of Value. If your father finds you somewhat dull and, to help you to get through your examination, decides to engage a tutor, the Labour Theory of Value will not enable him to decide the remuneration to be paid to the tutor. The Labour Theory of Value, therefore, has a sociological significance. It has not the immediate, practical or the market-place significance.

## DADABHAI AND MARX

In this connection, I would like to invite your attention to the remarkable contribution made by Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917). Karl Marx wrote his great book *Capital* on the strength of the researches that he carried on, day after day, for thirty years, in the British Museum. Almost at the same time, when Marx was carrying on his researches in the functioning of capitalism, another scholar of the same intellectual sweep, and the same perspicacity of thought, was pouring over reference books in the same great library. That was Dadabhai Naoroji. Whether the two ever met, there is no means of knowing. Dadabhai Naoroji's monumental book, which many refer to but few care to read, was *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. Therein he developed what is known as the *Drain Theory*. Dadabhai argued, that under British rule, life-blood was being drained out of India; the economic consequences of British rule were disastrous for India. Theodore Morrison tried to refute Dadabhai's theory. Analytically speaking, it could be proved that there was little or no economic drain of India ! For every item of expenditure in the ledger there was always an entry of services rendered or goods sent in. But sociologically speaking, the Drain Theory alone enables one to understand the havoc that was being wrought in India by the working of imperialism. The working of the laws of colonialism can be uncovered by the Drain Theory alone, as the laws of capitalism can be uncovered by the Labour Theory of Value. Simultaneously, these two intellectual giants were able to formulate two sociological theories of world-shaking significance.

Why did Dadabhai discover the laws of motion of colonialism ? Because Dadabhai was primarily concerned with the exploitation of one nation by another, as Marx was primarily concerned with the exploitation of one class by another. Even so great a writer as Karl Marx, so profound a thinker as Marx, was himself a child of historical circumstances. Dadabhai was called upon to answer the question posed by exploitation under imperialism, was called upon to provide the intellectual scaffoldings for the fabric of nationalism, while Marx was called upon to provide the intellectual scaffoldings for the fabric of working class socialist movement. Both of them had two distinct, two



separate, problems and they were able to offer solutions that light up the two most difficult problems of our age.

The Labour Theory of Value as also the Drain Theory of Colonialism are of sociological importance, they are not of practical or analytical significance. The Drain Theory enables you to understand why Indians become nationalists, but will not help you to criticise the figures of the sea-borne trade, for instance. Theodore Morrison disproved Dadabhai by basing his arguments upon the figures supplied by the sea-borne trade or by the balance of payment between India and Britain. But the march of history has shown that Theodore Morrison was merely a plodder compared to the gifted genius and the daring insight of Dadabhai Naoroji. So also, the Labour Theory of Value can be proved to be wrong, but history has shown that it is through that theory that the forces of the working class have been able to achieve world-shaking ends.

#### MARGINAL UTILITY.

On the other hand, Fabianism is an essentially pragmatic, a matter-of-fact approach. Therefore, it believes in the Marginal Utility Theory of Value. Students of economics are aware how the different theories of value have emerged. The Labour Theory of Value was prevalent in the days of Ricardo. Later on, it was discarded for other theories: J. S. Mill elaborated a new theory—the Factors of Production Theory. Then we come to the third stage, when almost simultaneously in Austria, Britain and Switzerland, the Marginal Utility Theory was outlined; Jevons, Menger and Walras developed the new theory based upon psychological calculations; you are familiar with the well-known example: if you are very thirsty, when your very life depends on water, you would be willing to pay a hundred or even a thousand rupees for a glass of water. There is nothing that a person values more than water. And there is nothing cheaper than water! You cannot survive for more than five minutes without air, but air is free except when you live in congested lung-less cities like Bombay. How to explain this paradox? Water, air, bread, which are so precious, the very staff of life, are yet so cheap! The answer is obvious: if you needed one glass of water very very badly, there is no doubt you would be paying 100 rupees or 500 rupees for it. For the

next glass of water. you might be willing to pay a few annas or a few rupees, if you feel that you will not be able to get water for a long time. If a third cup is offered to you, water's price will fall. The fourth cup of water will probably have no price at all. Therefore, each unit, whether it is water, bread, or room, yields decreasing satisfaction—not the total satisfaction, because the total satisfaction is bound to grow, but the *marginal* satisfaction. It is an important psychological discovery that was made in the seventies of the last century. The Marginal Utility Theory, therefore, outlines a theory of value on the basis of the importance you attach to a thing at its margin. The price of water is determined by the price you are prepared to pay for the last glass of water that is offered to you, for the glass that you decide to take instead of rejecting.

The Marginal Utility Theory is taken over by the Fabians. Every student of economics knows that the manifold problems of economic life as they are lived from day to day are comprehended only with the help of the Marginal Utility Theory of Value. It was, I believe, G. D. H. Cole who made the distinction that while others analysed capitalism, Marx tried to understand capitalism by going beyond it, viewed it from without. Marx's effort of looking at capitalism is like that of the man from the moon viewing the life of our planet. Marginal Utility Theory looks at capitalism from within its framework. That is to say, it is analytical as against the sociological and philosophical nature of the Labour Theory of Value.

#### QUASI RENT

The concept of rent forms an important and an integral part of Ricardian economics. What is rent? Suppose there are a number of plots of land—some more fertile than the other. The price ultimately is determined by the Marginal Utility of the last pound of foodgrain that is produced. The price therefore will be determined on the basis of the worthwhileness of producing the last pound of foodgrain from the least fertile land, because, if price is not fixed at that level, that last pound of foodgrain will not be produced from the least fertile land. A farmer would be willing to produce that extra pound from an unfertile field only if the price covers the extra cost. That price on the margin will determine the price as a whole. When you



go to the market there is the same price for wheat, for a particular quality of wheat; the price will be the same irrespective of the fact that some wheat has come from a fertile field and some from less fertile fields. What happens then? The more fertile field, which produces more than the less fertile field, will yield an additional income to its owner. That additional income, however, does not affect the price. Because the price is ultimately determined by the cost of production of the marginal unit from the less fertile field, extra fertility does not enter price, but augments profit. The surplus that the owner takes, therefore, is the rent that he gets because of the greater fertility of his field. That, very roughly, is the basic idea behind the theory of rent. Rent does not enter price. If the differential advantage that goes to the owner is taken away by tax, the price will remain unchanged. If from the beginning, for instance, either the land had been kept by the municipality, or the local board in its own hands or if every time the land was sold from one person to another, the profit made by the seller had been taken away by a gains tax, the price of the produce from the land would not have been affected. The unearned income, from social progress, would have remained with the community instead of enriching a few families. As Henry George advocated, such a tax would be sufficient to meet most of the expenses of a simple state. It was on this logic that he developed the Single Tax Movement. (Ref. his *Progress and Poverty*.)

The above argument is extended to other fields of economic life by the Fabians. A textile mill situated, for instance, in a cotton area will have certain advantages. A factory situated in a place where there are facilities of transport—sea, rail and road—will have advantages that are denied to a factory which is situated at an inaccessible place. These advantages are not of the making of a particular person, but they are due to site advantage. Such advantages yield *quasi* rent, and if it is taken over by the state, price will not be affected in any way. The consumer will not be worse off, while as a citizen he will be better off because the state will use the resources to improve social amenities.

In this way, through an analytical approach, the Fabians developed a theory of socialism whose main pillar was community control over combinations of capital. The Fabians recognised

the tendency to monopoly inherent in capitalism. It can be checked, according to Fabians, either by prohibition and dissolution of the monopolies, which means that the state must function effectively and continuously, or by taxation and state direction. The proper approach would be for the state to take over and administer the monopolies and thereby nationalise the gains of monopoly.

Such, in brief, are the economic foundations of Fabian socialism.

#### CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECT

So far we have discussed only the critical aspect of the economics of socialism. The constructive problems differ for economically developed countries from the economically under-developed countries. Books of Lerner and Lange discuss the problems of developed countries. Two recent publications discuss them, one from the characteristic German theoretical angle, Beckwith's *Economic Theory of Socialist Economy*, and the other from a popular point of view, G. D. H. Cole's *Socialist Economics*. While these problems are important, for an under-developed country like ours they are not of immediate relevance. I would therefore devote my next lecture to the problems of under-developed economy in the early phase of socialist reconstruction.



## Lecture VI

### ECONOMICS OF SOCIALISM

What are the problems of socialist construction that face the workers in an under-developed country? Russia provides an interesting case-study.

When the Communists seized power Russia was an economically under-developed country. Agriculture was being carried on in the traditional manner; industrial expansion had not gone far, the standard of life of the people was low. These difficulties were increased by the tremendous destruction that resulted from the war that preceded, and the civil wars that accompanied the revolution of 1917. As a matter of fact, the Communists could come to power because the entire fabric of the economic life of Czarist Russia had got, not merely loosened, but disrupted. The process of disruption was continued by the civil war that followed the revolution.

By the end of the civil war Russia was in ruins. Only 13 per cent of the pre-war industry was operating. Transportation had collapsed, and more than 60 per cent of the locomotives were out of service. The decline in agriculture was no less catastrophic: only two-thirds of land was under cultivation, the yield had dropped to 40 per cent and the live-stock to 35 per cent of the pre-war level. Such was the "cost" of revolution!

There are many socialists who turn up their noses at the mention of the word *compensation*. They fail to realise that often the price of revolution is ten to twenty times the cost of compensation. And that price falls on the people, for ultimately all burdens have to be borne by them. Compensation therefore can never be a theoretical issue, it has to be viewed empirically. It is unfortunate that the wise words of Engels are usually forgotten: "Under no conditions do we regard indemnity as inadmissible; very often Marx expressed to me the opinion that the cheapest way would be to buy off the whole gang."

## THE CRUCIAL ISSUE

The workers' government was called upon to rebuild the disrupted economy. That meant capital resources. From where was capital to come? How was it to be accumulated? Elimination of the capitalists does not put an end to the need for capital. It is only then that the problem becomes acute in an under-developed country. What is capital? Capital is accumulated savings—the difference between what you earn and what you spend. Individual savings are made up of the difference between individual earnings and expenditure. A nation's capital is made up of the differences between the nation's production and the people's consumption. Whose consumption is to be cut down in order to augment savings? The landlords and big capitalists were gone. So who next? That was the first question that arose.

Three different solutions were offered. The least painful was the one put forward by Bukharin. He said that the peasants should be permitted to produce as much as they can and by inducing them with advantages of co-operative marketing, credit facilities, and other incentives bring them into co-operatives, and through their help build up agriculture and get the resources for other economic development. In industries too, a similar suggestion was made by him, as most of the important industries had been taken over by the state. As the commanding heights of industry were controlled by the proletariat, the lower regions, the smaller factories and similar industrial units, might be safely left to the initiative and the enterprise of artisans and *entrepreneurs*; "*Enriches vous!*" There would be no fear of re-emergence of capitalism because the strategic positions, in administration as well as industries, were held by the working class. As the proletariat would be the pace setter of the industrial economy, there would be no real danger in leaving the lower regions to private enterprise.

Bukharin's policy was more or less the continuance of the New Economic Policy inaugurated by Lenin, described by him as "One step backward, (in order to take) two steps forward." Lenin had resorted to this policy only because he felt there was no other way of restoring health to the nation's economy, after failure of war communism. What policy Lenin would have advocated after the move had worked itself out, there is no means



of knowing because Lenin died before the NEP had run its course. Lenin's death at a crucial period makes it difficult to know what would have been his long term policy. The NEP was projected by Bukharin into the future—not merely as a short term tactic, but as a long term, basic strategy for building up socialism.

Bukharin was for a slow pace of industrialisation, a pace that would be sustained by the resources, the effort and the goodwill of the people. He wanted that the strain put on the economy and the people should be just what would be willingly borne by the people. Trotsky favoured a rapid development of the economy. Such a development of economy demanded in his view a continuous struggle with the remnants of *bourgeoisie* within the country. Bukharin was in favour of arriving at some understanding, if need be, with the better-off peasants. He was for an understanding with smaller capitalists, who may be permitted to operate within a general framework of industrial development, and thus get at least a part of capital accumulation through the traditional methods. He was, therefore, in favour of *muffling* the class conflict, of *blunting* the edge of internal struggle.

#### PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Trotsky, on the other hand, was in favour of sharpening them. Only by sharpening the class conflict within would it be possible to move towards early industrialisation, because, Trotsky argued, the peasant proprietor, the artisan, small factory owner, were all remnants of not only the bourgeois class, but represented an economy that was inimical to socialist development. That was just one part of his analysis. The more important part of his argument was that *it is impossible to build up socialist economy in an under-developed country unless and until its destinies are linked up with a highly developed country*. If you want to build socialism in Russia, workers' revolution in Germany, for instance, would be absolutely necessary. It would be still better to have a revolution in Britain and the United States also. Workers' revolution in developed countries would make it possible for the under-developed countries to get the resources in capital, technical aid, personnel and cultural leadership, that are needed to build socialism. As socialism cannot be built up in an undeveloped country, one must be continu-

ously working for extension of the frontiers of the revolution. The revolution that has already succeeded in an undeveloped country must roll on to become a revolution in developed countries. It was argued by a section of the Communist Party that there was always the danger of Russia, industrially weak Russia, becoming a victim of aggression. To that Trotsky replied that the best defence against such aggression would be ceaseless effort at a two-fold revolution—one, revolution in colonial countries against imperialists, two, workers' revolutions against capitalists in highly developed countries. If you move fast in China against the forces of Chiang Kai-shek and his patrons, if you strike deep against the capitalists and their hangers-on in Germany, Britain and the U.S.A., you not only would be protecting the revolution in Russia, but would be obtaining for the under-developed Russian economy capital and technical aid without which socialist economy can never be built up.

Take India for instance. To develop Indian economy, we need a lot of capital. Every day you must be reading in the newspapers about the abandoning or the slowing down of projects because of lack of capital. Our river valley schemes can be realised only when we have Rs. 1,800 crores. If a steel plant is to be set up and our steel production doubled, we need probably Rs. 200 crores. Every development plan ultimately means money. Where is the capital to come from? Either our people must save—which means we must reduce our consumption and augment our production; work harder, work longer and consume less, or get assistance from developed countries, abroad.

Trotsky argued, and followers of Trotsky argue today, that if there is a revolution in the U.S.A., the superabundant capital there would be available for the development of India's economy. The U.S.A., for instance, spends on defence alone, on the maintenance of Army, Navy, Air Force and the Marines, 22,000 million dollars, which is more than the entire national income of India which is just 18,000 million dollars. To double the national income of India, an investment of Rs. 7,000 crores would be needed over a period of years—that amount is just eight months' expenditure on defence by the U.S.A. Trotsky and his followers, from such instances, argue that if there is a socialist revolution in the U.S.A., there not only need be no fear of war and therefore no need to waste money or armaments,



but 22,000 million dollars would be available every year for the development of the under-developed countries of Asia and Africa, without lowering the standard of life of the workers in the U.S.A. This two-fold aspect, therefore, of sharpening of class struggle, inside the country, even under-developed countries ruled by workers, and the extension of revolutionary struggle to all capitalist countries is the essence of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

How the Permanent Revolution is to be organised is a separate question. How we in India are to work for a revolution in America is a question that usually gets merely an echo for the answer! We are told that there will be one massive workers' party the world over, which will have its sections in every country. If we are to wait for revolution in the U.S.A., none knows how long the watch will have to be. I view the world revolution in the same way as Sorel did the General Strike—a *social myth*—which has an evocative power, which has organisational significance, but which in the last analysis remains a myth! Trotsky's solution of the Permanent Revolution would not have appealed, in my opinion to the Russian people, if they ever had an opportunity to choose between the Bukharinite solution and Trotskyite solution. If there had been a democratic vote, Trotsky's solution would have found slim support. I do not think, in any country in the world, Trotsky's solution would find popular support. It might find a limited support from men who are possessed with an idea. But it cannot be, and has not proved, in any country, a popular solution.

#### STALIN'S SOLUTION

Stalin offered a third solution. He said, it is possible to build socialism in one country. It is possible, through collectivisation of agriculture and rapid industrialisation, to build the foundations of a socialist economy. Without waiting for a revolution in the U.S.A., or in England or in Germany (and by that time two abortive efforts were made at revolution in Germany; the General Strike in England had proved a dismal failure and the U.S.A., was experiencing a period of unparalleled boom, "The Coolidge era of prosperity"—with these facts in front, you can well imagine how unreal appeared the counsel of Permanent Revolution), it is possible to build up socialism by our

own efforts and within our own frontiers, argued Stalin. But that would demand a tremendous movement forward in the organisation of collectivised agriculture and nationalised industry. Not only the existing factories have to be nationalised which is easy, but a large number of new factories have to be built, which means vast new capital has to be found. Such capital without foreign aid, will demand, in the initial period at least steadily rising production and stationary, if not declining, consumption.

For a period of time, say ten to fifteen years, financial resources must be husbanded and invested to build the capital base of economy.

You are familiar with the fact that if you want to buy a bicycle, which would facilitate your locomotion and enable you to accept a tuition and thereby add to your present income, you must set aside some money. If a bicycle costs Rs. 200, you will have to put aside Rs. 20 a month for ten months, before you can buy it. Then the new job will raise your income by, say, Rs. 30 a month. But for a period of ten months, you must forego your cigarettes, cinemas, and even face the wrath of your wife when you refuse her a new pair of *chappals*. The bicycle cannot be consumed, it is a means of locomotion, therefore of production. By lowering consumption for ten months and equipping yourself with new means of locomotion, you are *eventually* able to raise your income by Rs. 30 a month.

What is true of an individual is true of a country. To augment national income, factories have to be built, dams have to be constructed. They do not yield results in a day. You must not merely wait till such time as the factories or the river projects start yielding results, but keep sacrificing to build them up. Agricultural development takes time. Industrial development takes longer time. During that period, you have to forego a part of your consumption, or at least maintain your consumption stationary, while production is going up. The difference between expanding production and stationary or declining consumption is savings, which when invested help to build a nation's economy.

So, Socialism in one country meant the tightening up of the belts of the people. While on the one side, every effort has to be made to augment production through the application of every form of incentive as well as coercion, on the other side,



ceaseless efforts have to be made to keep consumption as controlled as possible, so that the pool of savings might grow. That is the inevitable price that has to be paid for socialism in one country, especially in an under-developed country. In a developed country, these questions do not arise, but we are here considering under-developed countries only.

Such was the famous controversy between Trotsky and Stalin. Permanent Revolution on one side, and socialism in one country (Stalin's greatest theoretical contribution to socialism) on the other. [Anyone who is interested in understanding the theory of socialism in one country in greater details, may turn to Issac Deutsch's recent biography of *Marshal Stalin*.]

I would like to point out that if Russia had been a democratic state these controversies would have been decided by the people. The three platforms, Bukharin's platform of what one might call "mild and slow development," Stalin's platform of "socialism in one country", and Trotsky's platform of "Permanent Revolution," would have come before the people and I have not the least doubt that the people of Russia would have voted for Bukharin. Few people are willing to tighten their belts beyond endurance. No people are prepared to gamble upon a revolution in a remote country in order that their problems may be solved ultimately by linking up their destinies with those of that country. My own view is that Bukharin would have got a big majority, Stalin would have got a substantial minority, and Trotsky a microscopic minority.

In actual fact, in the Soviet Union, these questions were resolved by manoeuvres among the rivals. Stalin first combined with Bukharin, countered Trotsky's arguments with the arguments of Bukharin and thus eliminated Trotsky. He was not just defeated. He was maligned and exiled. Then Stalin took over most of the arguments of Trotsky to defeat Bukharin. There too it was not a political defeat but physical destruction. The rival points of view had no opportunity to come to people again. In 1933, for instance, Bukharin could have scored devastating points against Stalin. But he never got a chance in the proletarian democracy of the Soviet Union. The loss was not only of Trotsky and Bukharin but of the Russian people.

We have discussed so far the problems of transition and most of our attention was devoted to a review of historical facts

that are available to us from the Soviet Union. I have endeavoured to explain to you the various controversies that arose in that country during the early years of the revolution.

[Those of you who are interested in gaining a fuller insight into the controversies will find Barrington Moore's recent book, *Soviet Politics: the Dilemma of Power*, useful as well as stimulating. Those of you who want to come to grips with the economic data of that period would do well to turn to Maurice Dobb's book, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917*. Prof. Dobb is very sympathetic to the Soviet experiment and his book may be taken as the most friendly, at the same time scholarly, account that is available.

[Those who are interested in understanding the problem not in the framework of revolution, but as an independent economic phenomenon, may turn to two other books which deal not with the problems and dilemmas of the Soviet Union but with the problems of other under-developed sections of the world. One is Mendelbaum's *The Economic Development of South-East Europe*. The other is Chang's *Agriculture and Industrialisation* dealing with China. The reason why I am inviting your attention to these books is that it is necessary to understand the problems of developing under-developed economy in a detached manner. Emotional overtones, political considerations should not be permitted to colour one's understanding of the basic problems involved in accelerating the development of an under-developed economy.]

#### TELESCOPING DEVELOPMENT

Leaving aside the problems of transition, when we turn to the problem of further development, what exactly is its shape that confronts us? I would like you to understand that what is sought is the *telescoping* of economic development to achieve within a short period of time what it has taken long years for countries that developed their economies along the traditional capitalist lines. The United Kingdom, which became, in the words of Prof. Cunningham, "The Workshop of the World," took seventy years or more to achieve the transition from a predominantly agricultural economy to a predominantly industrial economy. Any student of industrial revolution knows that the



revolution began in 1760 and its first phase was over by 1830. [Only recently a stimulating book on the subject has been published by the Home University Library. Those of you who are interested in getting acquainted with the strains and pains of this transition cannot find a better book than T. S. Ashton's *The Industrial Revolution*.]

In the U.S.A. it took over two generations to achieve the same transformation. Some of you probably remember the speech made by the American Ambassador to India, Dr. Grady, at the ECAFE Conference at Ootacamund. It was there that he pointed out that "Asian nations must remember that it took the U.S.A. 100 years to transform itself from an agricultural country to a highly industrialised country. That period cannot be shortened very much." That is the argument that is put forward by advocates of the traditional economic theory and traditional economic practice. Advocates of capitalism argue that the development of economy from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy must take its own time. It is an organic growth and it cannot be shortened except at prohibitive cost.

What socialists, on the other hand, have sought to achieve is to bring about this transformation rapidly. Precise discussion becomes difficult because the literature produced on the subject by the Soviet Union is essentially propagandist. Even statistics in Soviet Russia are considered to be "soldiers in the battle of socialism," meaning thereby that there are no objective, no reliable statistics. From 1928 the Soviet Union has been boasting of not only reaching the American standards, but of outdistancing American achievements. Such propaganda, doled out for the consumption of sycophants, makes it very difficult for a serious student of socialism to discover the rate of development and its cost in terms of hardships to the people. The Soviet statistics are rarely given in absolute terms, they are mostly given in percentages. For instance, output of wheat in 1928 will be given in terms of the output, say, in 1920. The production in 1940 again would be given as a percentage of output in, say, 1933, and so on. With such difficulties it is not easy to chart the development of Russian economy. The fact, however, remains that its rate of growth was phenomenal.

The following table gives the average annual rate of growth of industrial production in different countries :—

Country	Period	Number of Years	Rate of Growth
Great Britain	.. 1812-1924	112	2.5
France	.. 1812-1911	99	1.8
U.S.A.	.. 1849-1929	80	4.8
Canada	.. 1871-1927	56	5.2
Soviet Russia	{ 1913-1940	27	8.3
	{ 1928-1940	12	18.3

Growth at the rate of 18.3 per cent *per annum* means doubling the industrial wealth in a period of five years or less ! This is the fastest rate of development ever attempted in the world. The speed of industrialisation depends on four factors, two of which are the stage of technological development at which the country embarks upon rapid industrialisation and the other is the initiative shown by government in the process of economic change. Countries seeking industrialisation are able to utilize the technological achievements of older countries, and thereby save time and efforts.

#### PLANNED ECONOMY

The rate of progress was unusually high in the Soviet Union for more than one reason, the chief among which was the adoption of the policy of economic planning. Marx had not, to the best of my knowledge, elaborated the concept of Planned Economy. Neither had any of his followers wrestled with the idea till the end of the first World War. It was only then, as I pointed out earlier, that in Russia, in Germany and in Great Britain, attention was directed to the problems of economic development in a socialist society. What had been dismissed so far as utopian became items on the agenda of history. And spokesmen of the socialist movement were called upon to grapple with them. Planned Economy was the solution, evolved by socialists, for achieving rapid economic development.\*

The essence of capitalist economy is the acceptance of sover-

\*As in many other directions, the first glimmering of central economic planning, of *economic dirigée*, is to be found in the teachings of Saint-Simon.



ignty of the market. The market, according to the classical tenets of capitalism, must decide not only the price but the distribution of the factors of production, as also the pattern of development. I am anxious that you should understand both these phrases: distribution of the factors of production as also the pattern of economic development. Take cement. The price of cement, per ton, will be determined in the market. It will be determined, in the absence of a monopoly, by the laws of supply and demand. Greater the supply, lower the price. Bigger the demand, higher the price. That is only a minor function of the market. The market will also decide what use is to be made of cement. There will be competing buyers. You may want to buy cement to build a hospital for which funds have been collected by public subscription. Your resources will be limited. It is possible that a stage may be reached where the price of cement may appear to you to be prohibitive. There may be another person who is prepared to buy cement at any price, in order to build a cinema-theatre. Obviously, a hospital is far more important for general well-being than a cinema house. But the laws of market will decide that as the proprietor of a cinema theatre is in a position to make his demand *effective* against the donors of hospital, cement shall go for construction of the cinema house. Where labour will go, where capital will flow, how various resources—natural as well as industrial—shall be used, are questions that are decided by the market, that is, by persons with the longest purse. The limited resources of capital, assuming that a nation saves 50 crores of rupees a year, then the 50 crores of rupees will be directed into the channels where the highest possible return can be obtained for investment. A hospital may not be able to pay any return. A cinema theatre, a liquor shop, a luxury hotel, may be able to pay a big dividend. Under market economy, capital resources will be directed towards luxury hotel, liquor shop, or cinema theatre and away from hospitals and schools.

The very fact that the factors of production are diverted in a particular direction, and away from other directions, determines the pattern of economic development. There will be more theatres and fewer hospitals. There will be more cigarette factories and few factories for sewing machines. In that way, the profit motive, operations in the market, will determine not only the prices but the distribution of the factors of production

and thereby the pattern of economic development. Such a society has an unplanned economy. There is no central authority which plans. Whatever decisions are taken are arrived by the blind forces of the market. It is however argued by orthodox economists that the blind forces of market really operate to the greatest good of the greatest number. From Adam Smith onwards, the theory of harmony has been developed. The theory of harmony suggests that, while each one pursue his own selfish interests "the unseen hand" of the market transmuted that selfishness into general well-being. I have not the time to explain to you the whole gamut of reasoning whereby these conclusions are reached. But those of you who are students of economics are aware of the arguments used to explain the transformation of the dross of selfish ends, through the alchemy of the market, into the gold of general weal. It is contended even to this day that any tampering with the automatic functioning of the market must harm public well-being. Any attempt at substituting human control for the blind operations of the market injures the nation as a whole.

[I would like to invite your attention to the arguments of three leading economists as set out in their monumental treatises on the subject. The high priest of this attack on planning and planned economy, and therefore on socialism, is Ludwig von Mises, the dean of Austrian economists. The same line of criticism has been ably developed by Prof. Hayek, till recently professor at the London School of Economics and now a professor at the Chicago University. In his symposium, *The Collectivist Economic Planning*, he has marshalled, with a team of colleagues, the case against economic planning. The third economist of repute to expound the same point of view is Prof. Lionel Robbins of the London School of Economics. These three writers (there are others too) have offered serious criticisms of planned economy and any earnest student of socialism, must take note of their criticisms. The "definitive" treatise on the subject is a thousand-page volume of Prof. von Mises, *Socialism*. Karl Marx, the prophet of socialism, paid tribute to capitalism by calling his *magnum opus*, *Capital*, von Mises, the acutest critic of socialism, pays his tribute to the enemy by calling his book, *Socialism* !

[Those of you who are interested in a juxtaposition of the



two theses, in favour of planning and against planning, cannot do better than turn to Mrs. Barbara Wootton's *Plan or No Plan*. The book was published in 1933, but I believe it still retains topical interest. Those who want a brief treatment of Economic Planning, given in simple terms, may turn to Prof. Arthur Lewis' recently published book, *The Principles of Economic Planning*. Prof. Lewis, a native of West Indies, is a writer of outstanding intellectual clarity and unusual felicity of expression.]

Planned Economy has become such an important subject, that a systematic treatment of it would demand a series of lectures. I can, therefore, only indicate some problems and offer my criticisms.

### FIRST BREACHES

The tenets of classical economics, the pristine laws of capitalism, were vitiated by the emergence of monopoly. I tried to explain to you earlier how perfect competition of Adam Smith's conception was destroyed by the imperfect competition that inevitably developed with the emergence of monopoly as also with the fact that between the masters of capital and men who have to live by selling their labour-power there is no equality of bargaining power. There is another aspect of the same problem to which attention needs now to be given. That is the impact of industrial economy on agrarian countries. England, as you know, was the first country to become industrialised. Industrial goods produced in that country were exported to every corner of the world, and country after country found that before the onrush of manufactured articles, the traditional handicrafts and domestic industries were at a serious disadvantage.

The havoc that was wrought by industrial goods produced in England on agrarian economy is most ably described in the monumental works of Romesh Chandra Dutt: *Economic History of India* and *India in the Victorian Age*. These two books, to my mind, are probably the most illuminating treatises available on the havoc wrought by British goods on undeveloped economies.

A somewhat similar impact was felt by Germany, U.S.A. and other countries. And that gave birth to a new economic theory. There is a constant action and reaction between economic facts and economic theories. Economic theories are the

product of economic facts, and economic situations in their turn are influenced by the emergence of new economic theories. [A brilliant book on the subject is W. Starr's *The History of Economics in its Relation to Social Development*.] It was to offer a solution to the flood of industrial goods flowing into Germany that Frederick List developed the theory of *protection to infant industries: the state must intervene to protect indigenous, nascent industries against foreign competition from more developed economies*. Almost simultaneously, the theory was developed by Prof. Carey in the U.S.A. A little later, the same theory was developed in India by the late Justice Ranade. The Protectionist Theory suggested that the state has a positive role to play in economic life. The blind forces of the market cannot be permitted to operate, because if they do, all wealth would accumulate in England and men would decay in the rest of the world. Oliver Goldsmith had said that of his own country, when it was passing through the throes of the industrial revolution, there was now a danger of world-wide polarisation of wealth, technique, modern knowledge and industry accumulating in England, and men decaying in the rest of the world. That process would be halted and reversed only by an effective intervention by the state. The advice of Frederick List and Carey was heeded because they had free governments in their countries. Because India was unfree, Ranade's voice remained a voice in the wilderness. My point is that laws of the market were not respected by capitalists in undeveloped countries. For the first time intervention achieved respectability. With the growth of big industrial combines, smaller capitalists found the strategic sectors of economy, that is, the most profitable sectors, getting closed for them. Under their pressure, in the U.S.A., Theodore Roosevelt came forward with the policy of breaking the monopolies, or "trust-busting." It was given statutory shape in the Sherman Act, which laid down that trusts should be compulsorily broken up with a view to foster smaller units and fair competition. This was an effort to protect small capitalists against big monopolists inside the country. You will, thus, find that the policy of intervention in economic matters, interference with the operations of the market, was inaugurated by the capitalists themselves. The socialists now argue that this policy be carried to its logical conclusion. What is sauce for the capitalist goose is sauce for the working class gander! State must intervene at every stage and instead of



leaving economic decision to the blind forces of the market, those decisions should be taken by a central planning authority. The central planning authority will decide what is to be produced, how it is to be produced, how much is to be produced, what is to be consumed and so on. The economic brain of the country, seated in the planning commission, will decide the direction of economic development as well as the pattern of economic development. This concept of centrally planned economy, of a planning commission taking over the functions of the market, is one of the concrete contributions made by socialist thinkers to economic science. It marks almost a Copernican Revolution in economic thought. With Planned Economy, there will have to be a planning commission that will decide what is to be produced, how it is to be produced. Naturally, a planning commission will have to decide how fast is going to be the process of transition from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy.

#### COMPULSIONS OF BACKWARD ECONOMY

As you are aware, the national income of India is estimated at 9,000 crores of rupees per year. 36 crores of people—and if we exclude children, 18 crores of adult people—through their efforts, produce goods and services worth 9,000 crores per year. Savings in our country are in the neighbourhood of four to five hundred crores. If we are to industrialise the country, it will need a capital investment of at least Rs. 2,000 for every worker employed. If all the savings are used for industrial development, which means that all other needs of development are starved, 400 crores of rupees would provide work for two million factory workers. But even there, if preference is given, as will have to be given, to heavy industries, the capital investments will provide employment to a much smaller number of workers. In Tata Iron & Steel Co., for instance, per worker capital investment will work out to, I believe, Rs. 20,000 instead of 2,000. Lighter the industry, lesser the capital investment; heavy industries are those that produce machinery and other means of production, such as steel, cement, electrification plants, fertilisers, etc., while light industries are those that produce articles of consumption, such as cloth, biscuits, books, sugar. Heavier the industry, greater must be the investment, and what is produced by heavy industries cannot be consumed straight-

away. The beautiful steel bars that are produced by TISCO cannot be given to a hungry peasant. The locomotives will drive our railways, but they cannot solve our food problem. The heavy industries produce articles that cannot be consumed straightaway, but which help to augment production. The gains are realized only over a period of time. The capital invested in the production of a locomotive can be recovered only over a term of years, which is the span of a railway engine's usefulness. You cannot recover the full value in a few weeks or a few months, no matter what be the character of the government in power. There are certain laws of economics, imperious and intractable, that no revolution can overthrow!

It is the business of the planning authority to decide what percentage of the national income will be used for constructing heavy or capital goods industries. Money spent on this sector yields no immediate consumable goods. While workers working on the construction of river dams and steel plants receive wages, not a pound of extra food-grain or a yard of additional cloth goes to the market because of their efforts. The workers press with their purchasing power on the limited supply of consumption goods. Whenever the production of capital goods is markedly stepped up, inflationary pressure occurs. It can be checked by rationing and voluntary savings, or by increased prices, heavy turnover taxes, resulting in concealed or enforced savings.

Economic expansion demands an increasing shift from production of consumption goods to fabrication of capital goods. The standard of life of the people goes up only to the extent more machines, fertilisers, etc., are produced. Higher the ratio of consumption to capital goods, poorer the standard of life of the people. The following table shows the curve of development in the United Kingdom :—

RATIO OF CONSUMPTION GOODS TO CAPITAL  
GOODS INDUSTRIES IN GREAT BRITAIN  
1812-1924

<i>Years</i>				<i>Ratio</i>
1812	..	..	..	6.5/1
1851	..	..	..	4.7/1
1871	..	..	..	3.9/1
1901	..	..	..	1.7/1
1924	..	..	..	1.5/1



For the United States of America, the richest country in the world, the ratio is 0.8/1. The shift of resources from consumption goods to capital goods is therefore, the essence of economic development. Quicker and more far reaching the shift, faster the tempo of development. In the Soviet Union, in the first two Five-Year Plans (1927-1937), 85 per cent of the capital investments were made in the sector of capital goods industries, which means that the consumption goods industries were deliberately starved. Only by achieving such a startling shift was an unusually high ratio of progress realised.

The following extract from Bykov's *Bulletins on Soviet Economic Development* is revealing :

"Development of the most modern and comprehensive engineering industries was the foremost aim of all three Five-Year Plans, while the task of developing consumer goods industries was subordinated to the development of the capital goods industries. Even during the first Five-Year Plan period, investment in industry and in electrification was planned to amount to nearly five times the pre-revolutionary value of the basic capital of Russia's large scale industry; the latter had been estimated, in 1913, approximately at some 3,500 million roubles, whilst the investment in industry and electrification was planned to aggregate during the five years (1928-32) to as much as 15,000 million roubles (1913 prices). It was planned to invest 72.6 per cent of this total sum allocated, for investment in the development of capital goods industries and only 27.4 per cent in the consumer goods industries."

What was actually done is best brought out by the following table :—

Years	Investment in capital goods industries	Investment in consumer goods industries	The ratio of I to II
	(in million roubles)		
	I	II	
1928-32 ..	21,300	3,500	85.9 .. 14.1
1933-37 ..	49,800	8,800	84.9 .. 15.1
1838-42 ..	93,900	18,000	83.9 .. 16.1
(as planned)			

But such drastic curtailment in consumption, and the increase of savings and their investments in the capital goods industries must put a severe strain on the people. It means rigid, ruthless austerity.

### SAVINGS, HOW ?

How are savings to come ? Firstly, of course, they come from the incomes of the rich and the privileged. In India, for instance, there are 87,000 income-tax payers whose annual income exceeds Rs. 10,000. Their total income came to Rs. 254 crores, in 1948-49. If their incomes are slashed down to Rs. 10,000 a year, Rs. 170 crores would be available for economic development. If the big incomes of the *zamindars* and the *saliyanas* of rajas and nawabs are nationalised, and the discrepancies in the above calculations caused by tax evasions are corrected—the total would amount to Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 crores. *The elimination of the privileged class would thus yield Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 crores a year for economic construction.*

The needs of economic development of an under-developed country are far greater. To improve India's standard of life by a mere 25 per cent, an expenditure of Rs. 1,800 crores are needed, as the Colombo Plan has shown. I have calculated, with the help of some competent friends, that to put agriculture on its feet, investment of Rs. 2.1/2 crores per *taluka* will be needed. Even to rationalise production of land—not to mechanise, mind you,—all over India an investment of Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 8,000 crores will be needed. Investment for industrial development will reveal similar astronomical figures.

How are these amounts to be obtained ? If a rapid *tempo* of development is desired, heavy investments will be necessary. The strain will not be felt if adequate foreign aid, through the success of the Permanent Revolution, or through successful borrowings on traditional lines, is obtained. In the absence of such aid, or if the aid is only limited, the strain of development will have to be borne by the people. Who is to strike the balance between immediate sacrifices and future gains ? Who is to decide upto what notch the belt is to be tightened ? These are questions of profound importance to every citizen as they intimately affect the whole texture of man's life.



These decisions are all the more important in the initial stages of development, because later on savings and investments grow in not merely arithmetical but geometric proportions.

In these early stages, the Communists argue that the decision should be taken by the Communist Party. It was Rousseau who had said,

“There is a great deal of difference between the will of all and the General Will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills, but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the General Will remains as the sum of the differences.” (*Contract Social*, 25.)

The Communists contend that their party alone embodies the General Will. It knows how to cancel the erratic pluses and minuses. If more parties were allowed to exist those pluses and minuses would find embodiment in them and the actual wills and wishes of the people would confuse and weaken the General Will, that is retard the pace of development. Such is the functional significance of a uni-party state—it drives relentlessly yet effectively the herd to the pasture ground of plenty !

In a multi-party state, very probably, the people would support a jog trot of economic development against an enforced gallop because it puts less immediate strains, though the future gains may be small, the immediate strains and pains are fewer. You will remember that only yesterday, I pointed out to you that if there had been political liberties in Russia, the people would have voted for Bukharin's platform and rejected Stalin's policy of forced collectivisation and industrialisation.

Stalin's policy involved tremendous, unbearable hardships. Peasants were driven forcibly into collectives and their resistance led to the man-made famine of 1932, wherein between ten to fifteen million persons perished. (cf. W. H. Chamberlain's *Russia's Iron Age*.) The need for rapid accumulation of capital and insistence of strengthening capital goods industries at the expense of consumer goods industries resulted in severe hardships to the people.

It is true that technical training was imparted to the people

in a big way. The following table shows the magnitude of the achievements :

Years	<i>Specialists graduated from :</i>	
	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Technical Schools</i>
1918-27 .. ..	5,68,600	9,42,800
1928-31 .. ..	1,70,000	2,91,200
1932-37 .. ..	3,69,900	6,23,000

But these men had to be chained to their jobs. The liberties the workers enjoy, even in bourgeois countries, of organising themselves, of changing their jobs, of moving from one job to another, were denied to the Soviet workers. (ref. Souvarine's *Stalin*.)

In order to speed up the economic development, labour power was recklessly used. To extract gold from the Kolyama mines in the Arctic regions, 200,000 men were made to work in terrible climatic and working conditions so as to send to Moscow, every year, 400 tons of gold. On the bones of the workers roads were built and the new economy organised. As free labour was not available on such a prodigal scale, and on the conditions offered, the Soviet State was driven to use prison labour. First the enemies of the proletarian state, and then all deviationists, were sent to the prison camps. Between 12 to 15 million men and women were consigned to prison camps to provide, through their sweat and blood, the resources needed for a frenzied development of the country.

[A number of reliable books have been published recently that give details of slave-labour and prison-camps in the Soviet Union. I shall invite your attention only to the accounts written from personal sufferings, but socialists of unrepachable integrity. The first is Margerate Buber's *Under Two Dictators*, the second is Elinor Lipper's *Eleven Years' Purgatory*. Together with these case histories, personal testaments, you should read the heavily documented book of Dallin and Nicalaevsky : *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia*.]

Higher the *tempo* of economic change, greater must be the accumulation of capital and severer the strain in undeveloped countries. As industrialisation proceeds, further production increases and savings and investments become easy. In the U.S.A., for instance, even the full strain of military preparations fail to depress the standard of life of the people.



<i>Production in (in millions)</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1949</i>	<i>1951 (estimated)</i>
Automobiles ..	3.5	8.6	5.1
Houses ..	0.6	1.3	0.8
Refrigerators ..	2.7	6.6	4.5
Washing Machines	1.6	5.1	2.6
Vacuum Cleaners	1.4	4.1	2.3
Television Sets ..	—	9.8	5.0

But under-developed countries, lacking capital-fat-covering on the bones of the economy feel the strain severely. Not for nothing did Marx describe the horrors of *primitive accumulation of capital*.

### CAPITAL FORMATION

There are three ways of formation of capital in under-developed countries: the *first* is the traditional capitalist method—the *sum process*. Under it peasants are uprooted through a policy of enclosure; they are pushed out of villages, so that they might provide labour force for industries and swell the ranks of the reserve army of unemployed to facilitate the extraction of surplus labour. The law of exploitation uncovers the arena of primitive accumulation of capital under capitalism. The worker is viewed as a raw material: juice is squeezed out of the orange and the rind is thrown in the dustbin. Only in this case the orange happens to be a worker, and the rind remains a human being ! Through poverty, misery, long hours of work, unemployment, capitalism accumulates the wherewithals of economic development.

The *second* method is the one developed by Stalin—of forced collectivisation of agriculture, and rapid industrialisation through slave labour. Prof. Dantwala has called this method—the *Siberian process*. The enemies of the people are treated as sub-human and ruthlessly used up to provide the sweat and blood through which capital formation takes place. As need for more and more slave labour emerges, the net is spread wider to catch the enemies of the people. All those who complain against the terrible strain of economic development straightaway become enemies of the people and provide fresh raw materials for economic development : forced labour, prison-camps, secret police

—these are all parts of one pattern. As free men are unwilling to accept the breakneck speed of economic development because of its terrible strain their liberties are taken away and those who dare to protest are consumed up, in the task of construction, as a locomotive uses up coal.

Apologists of Stalin deny these facts. A recent Indian visitor, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, avers that she saw no labour camps during her visit to Russia ! The question that the fellow-travellers have to answer is how has Stalin achieved the primitive accumulation of capital ? On whom has the strain been thrown ? This basic question, a truly Marxian question, the fellow-travellers never deign to answer.

The *third* alternative is to seek co-operation of the people. Tell them that economic development needs blood, sweat and tears. But that sacrifice shall come understandingly and freely. Being an under-developed country, accumulation of capital in India will not be painless. We shall have to depend on our immense human resources to further the formation of capital. Roads will have to be built, canals cut, tanks repaired by human labour. That labour must come through the willing consent of the people. This method may therefore be called—the *democratic process*.

#### OPENNESS OF ARGUMENT

Discussing democratic socialism in an economically developed country, like Great Britain, Prof. MacGregor writes :

“Democratic socialism means that degree of socialized industry which a modern democracy is thought to require, and depends on showing that the whole national economy needs to have a sphere of public control, either because of the conditions of some industries, or in order to prevent an undesirable degree of private authority . . . This openness of argument on what should be socialized is an aspect of the democratic choice. Democratic socialism is therefore limited socialism.” (*Economic Thought and Policy*, 131.)

In an under-developed country the “openness of argument” will be about the speed of industrialisation, the rate of accumulation of capital, the strain and sacrifices to be imposed, they will be “an aspect of the democratic choice.”



The comparatively limited resources of India will necessarily impose a slower rate of growth on India. The Soviet Union has six times the territory of India and less than half of our population. There is such abundant land there, that even after collectivization every peasant could be given an acre or two of land for individual cultivation. In India population presses far more heavily on limited resources.

The accumulation of capital will have to be made by the efforts and sacrifices of the working people. And the people have a right to say in determining whether Rs. 500 crores or 1,000 crores will be so saved and invested and in what sectors they will be invested and on what basis the savings made.

I know that many intelligent persons sneer at this suggestion. How can common people be made to understand such abstruse questions of savings and investments and about the *tempo* of economic development? The root of Communist philosophy is lack of faith in the people. The idea of trusteeship, ridiculed in Sun Yat-sen and Gandhi, is firmly believed in where Marxists themselves are concerned! So long as you believe in trusteeship, so long as you believe in the iceberg theory (that only the 1/10th of iceberg that is above water-level matters, that only the fraction of the society is intelligent, and that the remaining 9/10ths is worthless), you can never be the architect of a humane civilization. Do not forget that it was the appeal of an egalitarian, libertarian, associative social order that drew you to socialism. If you are to abandon the normal love of life, if you become a pilgrim of progress, it is in the pursuit of an ideal and the ideal that inspires you to sacrifice and renunciation is that of a humane social order. *And its basic foundation is faith in man, here and now.* If you have that faith, the question of pace and *tempo* of industrialisation, of the transformation of the economy, must be left to the wishes of the people. It should then be possible for the people to choose between the Bukharinite, the Stalinist and the Trotskyite platforms. It should be possible for them to push Bukharin out of power if they are dissatisfied with his pace of progress, and call Stalin to power, push Stalin out of power and give an opportunity to Trotsky to handle their affairs. No single party, no single platform, no single group of men, can have the temerity to say that it alone will provide the leadership of the people. It is the right

of the people to choose between alternate platforms, between alternate policies and according to their wisdom decide to work out one or the other policy. That is the logic of democracy. That is the essence of self-government, the core of representative government. "The pluses and minuses" of Rousseau are of sovereign significance. To muffle them, or to ignore them, is to reject the only facts that are relevant to an individual, it is to dismiss the experience that is meaningful to the citizens. Not the mythical General Will, but the *known* and *felt* pluses and minuses of opinions and experience are what matter. They are the warp and the weft of a free society.

That is the reason why I maintain that democracy is the very heart of socialism. Conversely, we cannot conceive of socialism outside the framework of democracy. Democracy and socialism together, *and only as two together*, make that ideal that we all seek to realise. The two cannot be divorced.

A socialist economy can never be built up through forced collectivisation, through forced labour camps and the Gestapo. That might mean economic development, but never social liberation. If you are building for socialism, economic planning has to be organised democratically, the people must have the right to choose between competing plans for economic development. It is to the lasting glory of Stafford Cripps that he never hesitated to tell his people that they shall have to choose austerity and agree to hardship and it is to the credit of the British people that they chose austerity and accepted hardship democratically. Those who sneer at the British Labour Party, have many lessons to learn, for they are just in the elementary school of socialist education.

### ECONOMIC EQUALITY

If the choice of alternatives is to be democratically made by the people, there must be economic equality. Because only then the choice becomes meaningful. There are some socialists who consider that equality of income is the heart and core of socialism. Bernard Shaw, for instance, has said, in his *The Intelligent Women's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*:

"What the Socialists say is that none of these plans will work well, and that the only satisfactory plan is to give



everybody an equal share no matter what sort of a person she is, or how old she is, or what sort of work she does, or who or what her father was."

To such pleas for economic equality a new, and decisive, argument has been added by a book recently published. It is Duesenberry's *Income, Savings and the Theory of Consumer Behaviour*. Reviewing the book, the *Economist* said that it marks the first important advance in economic theory made after Prof. Keynes. Surely, no higher tribute can be paid to a book ! What is the great advance that the book makes ?

"Our results can be summarised as follows :

- (1) The aggregate savings ratio is independent of the absolute level of aggregate income.
- (2) The aggregate savings ratio is dependent on (a) interest rates, (b) the relation between current and expected future income, (c) the distribution of income, (d) the age distribution of population, (e) the rate of growth of income.
- (3) Because of the discontinuity in preference functions the aggregate savings ratio will be rather insensitive to changes in interest rates, expectations, and preference parameters. Large changes in these factors will be required to produce substantial changes in the savings ratio.
- (4) *Ceteris paribus*, the propensity to save of an individual can be regarded as a rising function of his percentile position in the economic distribution. The parameters of that function will change with changes in the shape of the income distribution." (P. 45.)

Duesenberry is not a socialist agitator but a learned economist. Still he says that saving is a function of economic equality—the narrower the disparity in income, higher the propensity to save. Greater the difference, lesser the savings.

It is everyday experience that when we see others better off, we too like to spend and compete socially. When I see my friends better dressed and in newer footwears, I have an urge to spend on dress and shoes. Seven years back a fashion swept over India. Most educated people went in for the new Parker 51

fountain pen. I am sure you must have quarrelled with your parents to have the new pen, because it became a hallmark of social esteem. Suppose that costly pen had never been allowed to come to India, we would all have been content with our older pens ! What is true of the Parker pen is true of most other things. Conspicuous consumption, made possible by wide disparity in incomes, only fosters envy and wasteful expenditure among all sections of people.

If we desire to obtain savings through the willing co-operation of the people, economic equality becomes necessary. A missing pillar in the temple of socialism has now been supplied by Duesenberry.

In the Soviet Union, economic equality was abandoned after a brief period of trial. Today the spread-out in incomes there is in the neighbourhood of 1 to 80. While we in India have said, from Gandhiji's time, that the distance between the floor and the ceiling of income shall never be more than 1 to 10.

With the progress of "socialism in one country", income inequalities have increased in the Soviet Union. They have been justified, as Mrs. Asaf Ali has done recently, as incentives for increased production. In fact, these differences in income, in advantages enjoyed by the elite, are a part, as are the secret police and the labour camps, forced collectivization and slave labour, of the totalitarian method of economic transformation.

Please do not go away with the impression that all is black in Russia. For instance, against the widened disparity in income there have been marked social gains for the entire working people. My sole desire is to show you that economic equality is the necessary link that joins socialism with democracy.

#### MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRY

The problem of management of industrial enterprises raises a variety of question, not easy to answer. In the Soviet Union, the syndicalist approach was tried out in the first blush of the revolution. When it failed a collegium of workers was entrusted with the task of management. When that too failed to maintain production two-man directorate was set up, with one industrial manager and the other as political mentor. Ultimately the one-man management has been reverted to.



Democratic organisation of management is one of the ticklish problems of socialism. I have no cut and dried solution to offer. May I however invite your attention to the stimulating Fabian tract, written "to provoke discussion," *Industrial Management—The Socialist Way?* It is a subject that deserves separate consideration.

### SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

Lastly, let us turn to Socialism in One Country. We have seen how Stalin's version of Socialism in One Country has led to bureaucratisation and erosion of the revolution. Trotsky's thesis, that he has ably propounded in the *Revolution Betrayed*, is that by seeking to build up socialism in one country, by sealing off the revolution in the Soviet Union from industrially developed countries, Stalin had moved towards, what Trotsky loved to call after the experience of the French Revolution, a policy of Thermidor which in fact has spelt increasing bureaucratisation and dissipation of the gains of the revolution. There is more and more of bureaucracy, more and more of terror, less and less of loosening of control on the party, control on the state, control on the people. Instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat being a transitional phenomenon, it has proved a long-term incubus. It has happened that way, argues Trotsky, because of the wrong road chosen by Stalin. I have already conceded that there is no gainsaying the fact that if the more developed countries go socialist and if a World State could be created, Trotsky's contention would be true. But recent experiences of Yugoslavia have taught us that even in a socialist comity of nations there can be aggression by one socialist country against another. There can be an economic conflict between two socialist states. Therefore, there is no reason to believe, there is no inevitability when the U.S.A. goes socialist, that our pains and our strains will necessarily be reduced. They may be reduced or may not be reduced. A price may be asked from us, which we may not be prepared to pay. We can merely keep an open mind on the subject.

The real criticisms of Stalin's policy are not that he closed the door to Permanent Revolution, but that he has been a totalitarian and has steadily moved towards militarisation. The masters of Kremlin lack faith in the Soviet people, likewise

they have no faith in the peoples of other countries. The rulers of the Soviet Union would not go to the people of India, would not go to the people of Britain, and say, "We are your friends, we have no quarrel with you; if anyone tries to interfere with our life, please stand by us; if anyone tries to interfere with your life, we shall stand by you." After all, during the early days of the Russian Revolution, who saved the flames of the Revolution? Was not the might of the common people the world over the sword and the shield of the Russian Revolution? Was the revolution saved solely through the Red Army, that the genius of Trotsky had created out of nothing? Was it only the political acumen of Lenin? Did the organising abilities of the Communist Party save the Russian Revolution? If the Russians think so, they live in a fool's paradise! It was the sympathy of the working people; it was the threat of a general strike in England, that compelled Churchill to abandon his adventure of intervention in the Soviet Union. That sympathy the Communists have deliberately frittered away. Lacking faith in the common people, the masters of Kremlin have tried to interfere with the life of the people in every country by foisting on them the Communist Party.

[How it degenerates into an instrument of state power has been ably and brilliantly shown, in a monumental study recently published by Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*. Those who are interested in the tragedy, in the havoc that is wrought by the interference of the Russian state, by the Stalin machine, in the life of another people, in the revolutionary movement in Germany can ill-afford to miss Mrs. Fischer's book. She was a leader of the German Communist Party in the middle twenties.]

Engels had warned against the tendency to impose an order by a victorious proletariat on other people. In a letter written to Karl Kautsky, Engels had discussed the effect of proletariat victory in Europe and North America on the colonial countries of Asia and Africa. In the course of the letter Engels wrote :

"When Europe and North America are reorganised, that will be such a colossal force and such an example that the semi-civilized peoples will *of their own accord extend us their hand* : economic needs themselves will take care of this. Through what social and political phases



these countries will then have to pass until they arrive at socialist organisation is a question to which we could give today only a rather superfluous hypothesis. Today, I think only one thing is not in doubt: the *victorious proletariat cannot impose any kind of order on another people without undermining its own victory.*" (Italics mine.)

Stalin's policy of imposing *his* kind of order on other people has been responsible for the erosion of the gains of the October Revolution.

### DEGENERATION

If Russia had followed a policy of genuine United Front, if the Russian Communists,—whether Leninist, Stalinist or of any hue whatsoever—had put faith in the common people, had agreed to permit peoples to develop different socialist parties, had created an international of these authentic national parties, moving towards socialism in their own light, but not seeking to interfere with one another there would have been not only no Titoist upsurge, but there would have been today no conflict between the Communist and the Socialists. The world over today progressive opinion would have rallied together. But the fond belief that a group of men has a patent in revolution, that a group of men understands the march of history better than the people themselves, this belief in a totalitarian philosophy is responsible for the splitting up of the socialist movement. The little Marxes that strut about the world, in their megalomania fritter away the strength of socialism. They forget that "In the house of my Father, there are many mansions." In the house of socialism, there are many mansions. There is room for all.

That catholicity, that democratic understanding, that wide ranging vision, that willingness to accept the *bona fides* of people, is not given to most Marxists. Men who believe that they alone have the authentic vision of the world of tomorrow, who consider themselves to be the sole instruments of destiny, those who are heady with the thought that History has become conscious of itself in them,—such men have split the forces of progress and of socialism. They may have achieved something; they may have sacrificed something; but when the last chapters of history of socialism will be written, their place will be not

on the judgment seat but in the dock. I believe that the Russian state has degenerated, I believe that the world today faces the forces of darkness and despair, that the shadows of war lengthen over the world and threaten to destroy it, because, among other things, the Russian people have permitted themselves to become the dupes not only of a totalitarian tyranny but of a totalitarian philosophy. So long as totalitarian socialism continues to influence the minds of men and warp their thoughts, there will not only be no freedom, but there will be no *one world*. The spell of totalitarian thought has to be broken. To do that you will have to revise Leninism in the light of the pre-Leninists and Marxism in the light of the pre-Marxians. This is a bold statement to make, I make it because, not only logic is on my side, but because we have now before us the rich experience of the last thirty years. If I was living in 1917 I could have been excused if I had become a votary of the Leninist philosophy. But, no man can today claim to be a social scientist who refuses to take into consideration the events and experiences of our tragic generation, who refuses to uncover the causes of the degeneration and deviations that have disfigured the socialist movement of our time. The Stalinists dismiss every defeat by saying that capitalists are responsible for it, or that the Social Democrats are guilty. A favourite Stalinist slogan runs: "We shall catch the throat of the capitalist over the dead body of the socialist." The Trotskyites argue that because the temple of socialism has been taken over by the Stalinist devil, everything has gone wrong. These are more facile explanations. . . . To my mind, the only valid explanation, an explanation that fits the facts of history, is the one that warns against *belief in the possession of whole truth*. Realise the finiteness of man, the limitedness of man. Men, as Reinhold Neibuhr is never tired of reminding us, are children of light as well as children of darkness. The tensions of life are such that no one can say, not even the Buddha, that he has grasped the whole truth. We all move towards the realisation of truth. The nearer you are, farther it recedes. The goal ever eludes the grasp ! Because, to know the truth, is to reach the end. Geologists and biologists aver that from the point of view of history of man, we have lived only a few thousand years, millions and millions of years are yet on the unopened scroll of time. If we take the life of man on this planet as one day, we have lived only 4 minutes so far ! Therefore truth, the whole truth cannot be known now.



As I told you, when we had incidentally touched upon Dialectical Materialism that Marxists fondly believe that after Communism dialectics comes to an end. Social contradictions are there only so long as the slave fights the slave-owner, the serf the feudal lord, and the worker the capitalist. After the workers' state is established these contradictions slowly die down. As I then pointed out, new contradictions then, in fact, emerge. No longer will conflicts of men be on the biological plane; they will be on the psychological, on psychic plane. From the animal level the problems and tensions will be lifted to the human level. They become the problems and tensions of human spirit. The scars of mind are deeper than grim wounds of hunger and unemployment. The problems of human spirit, the battles of human soul are even more unsettling. These problems will have to be faced by the generations yet unborn. So, let no man have the audacity to say that he knows the truth! We seek it by exchanging experiences, by sharing opinions and ideas. Out of the meeting of minds, and interchanges of experiences a tentative truth emerges. The philosopher king of Plato's *Republic* has never existed on this side of the earth. There can be no philosopher king, no trustee, no dictator, no leader. As Rosa Luxemburg said, in the world now unfolding, the leaders will themselves be led by the followers. Let us have the Luxemburgian humility and recognise the fact that none of us has the possession of truth. The tentative truth has to be discovered through clash of ideas, exchange of opinions and interchange of experience. And that is democratic method.

Whether we look at the problem from the political angle, from the economic angle or from the cultural angle, as we shall do tomorrow, we invariably reach the conclusion that totalitarianism is a denial of the socialist vision, that socialism can be realised only through the acceptance of democracy and democracy can be realised only in the context of economic equality.

## Lecture VII

### SOCIALISM AND CULTURE

The theory of culture, evolved by Marx, is generally known as Historical Materialism, or the Economic Interpretation of History. And in so far as it deals with philosophy, it is known as Dialectical Materialism. I am not competent to discuss philosophy, that is the reason why I have not included in my talks a discussion on the philosophy of socialism.

What exactly is the Marxist theory of culture? You will recollect that, when we were discussing economics of socialism as well as politics of socialism, attention was given to the important role played by economic classes, also to property relations, to ownership of means of production, to organisation of forces of production, and to alignment of property relations. According to Karl Marx these factors mainly determine the political structure as well as the general texture of a society. The same theory is applied more generally to culture. "Legal relations as well as forms of state cannot be understood out of themselves nor out of the general development of the human mind," wrote Marx in 1843, "but, on the contrary, are rooted in the material conditions of life, the aggregate of which Hegel, following the precedent of the English and French of the 18th century, grouped together under the name of *civil society* and that *the anatomy of civil society has to be sought for in political economy.*"

#### FEUDAL CULTURE

It is argued that a culture is determined by the organisation of productive forces in an economy and the alignment of property relations. In a society, where the economic life is in the hands of the priestly class, the culture will be essentially saturated with religious orthodoxy and the state is likely to be theocratic.

The feudal society articulated a feudal culture of its own. Many of you have probably heard of words like "serenade" and "troubadour,"—they express the culture-pattern of a feudal society. Serenading is a word which describes the efforts of



a gallant young man to woo and win the favours of a beautiful damsel by exercising his musical talents. You remember the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. That scene is a characteristic facet of the feudal culture-pattern. The feudal barons had a lot of leisure, and the cultivation of manners and embroidering of emotions became recognised expressions of culture. Good manners became the hallmark of good life. Only in certain social *milieu* do modes and manners achieve such sovereign importance.

In Japan, it is said that tea drinking is a ceremony. In Bombay we gulp down a cup of tea in less time than it takes to note it! In feudal Japan, however, preparation of tea, serving of tea, drinking of tea, had developed to such a pitch of perfection, that young girls' education and culture were judged by their proficiency in that art. Such modes are possible only in societies where economic activities as such take little time of the dominant class.

I hope you know what was the essential features of a feudal society. The outstanding characteristic was that the lord of the manor went from estate to estate, eating up, literally consuming, the rent from the land. In the medieval age, when transport was difficult and costly, it was not easy to convey rent received in kind from the serfs to the feudal lord to a central place. Nor was it easy to sell it in the market. The estate of a feudal lord was therefore dotted with manorial houses. To these manors the lord would go and spend a few weeks or months, as the Governor of Bombay used to spend four months in a year in Bombay, Poona and Mahabaleshwar respectively. Likewise, a feudal lord would spend his time between his different manors, either on one big estate or scattered over a number of estates. At every place his effort was to eat up, to consume, the rent collected for him. Obviously he could not actually eat all up. No matter how big a feudal lord, he could not eat more than a loaf or two of bread per day, so he collected a retinue who ministered to his comforts and he would take the retinue with him, from manor to manor, consuming the rent collected and living a life of cultured ease.

In our own country, those who come from native states, know that after the integration of the states into provinces, in former capital towns cultural and artistic activities have received

a serious setback. Whether it be Baroda or Gwalior, when the princes were in power, a variety of cultural and artistic activities were wont to flourish with the support of the princes and their nobles, and these are sadly languishing today. A number of dancing girls, musicians, have been thrown on the street. Only the other day, Lala Sir Sri Ram told me that he proposes to collect funds for a foundation to support musicians, artists, etc., who are under the new dispensation threatened with destitution. The fact remains that in a feudal society time and resources could be devoted to the cultivation of arts, to the development of manners, to the organisation of a particular rhythm of life, which was ultimately based upon indifference towards productive work. A feudal lord was essentially a parasite. He had hardly any function to perform, except to indulge in warfare, or in poetical and musical contest, or in gallantry. Abduction of a Helen of Troy or of a Sita provided themes for epics, because the leaders of society had unlimited time and ample wealth at their disposal with no specific social function. Thus a feudal society develops its specific culture.

#### CAPITALIST CULTURE

When we come to the capitalist society we find that it has its own culture-pattern. In capitalist society, a culture develops that is all the time money-conscious. In a feudal society, for instance, saving would be stigmatised as miserliness. Open-handed generosity is a landed virtue. Willingness to draw out the sword at a slight affront, at the first breath of an insult, was the hallmark of a medieval hero. Who does not remember the romantic stories chronicled in Todd's *Annals of Rajasthan*? The *Annals* portray, quivering and colourfully, the patterns of feudal culture. Under capitalism, however, if you are insulted, all that you do is to go to the court and sue for damages: Everything has a price. If your wife commits adultery, you do not seek out and kill the seducer, but you go to the court and claim a big sum as damages. The virtue of a woman, the self-respect of a man, ancestral land, everything has a price! In a feudal society men would die for their plots of land. Why do villagers, even today, commit murders for land for which not unoften they get hanged? Because land means something deep and intimate to them. It is a part of their being. There is an organic



man-soil relationship. But in a capitalist society not only there is no organic man-soil relationship, but all intimacies revolve round the *cash nexus*. Capitalism thus develops its own culture. I have given just a few instances. Subtler instances can be given if you want, but I believe that a few bold strokes help to bring out sharply the outlines of the economic interpretation of culture.

### INTERACTION

Later, Marx and Engels realised that this was an oversimplification. They realised that if economic conditions influence the legal superstructure, religious speculations, philosophical ideas, and social habits, they too in their turn act and react on one another. The ultimate refinement of the economic interpretation of culture was that the economic factor is the *prime* factor, but not a *sole* factor. In the *Marx-Engels Correspondence*—a key-book for understanding Marx's ideas—you will find that during a period of thirty years the ideas of the fathers of scientific socialism slowly shifted from an exclusive emphasis on the economic factor to treating it as the primary factor. And that brings about a major shift in the understanding of culture. If the economic factor was the sole factor, then your history, your traditions, your social background, your philosophical ideas, would probably be meaningless.

"According to the materialist conception of history," wrote Engels, "the determining element is *ultimately* the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into the statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms it into a meaningless, abstract, and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, forms of law, and then even the reflexes of all these in the minds of the combatants : political, legal, philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma, also exercise their influence upon the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless hosts of accidents, . . . the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary.

There are innumerable intersecting forces, and infinite series of parallelograms of forces which give rise to one resultant—the historical event. Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it.” (Marx-Engels : *Selected Correspondence*, 475-7.)

### RELIGION AND CAPITALISM

You are probably aware of Prof. R. H. Tawney's book, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. He has linked the development of Protestant religion with the rise of capitalism. The essence of Protestant Christianity was that the conscience of every man shall decide what is right and what is proper. In the Catholic religion, the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, decides matters of religion and social life. Only this morning, you must have read in the newspapers that His Holiness the Pope has decreed that all Catholics must accept the dogma of the bodily assumption of Virgin Mary to heaven. If you doubt the miracle, you go out of the fold of the Catholic Church. The Protestant religion makes few demands of such a character upon the believers. That each man's conscience will decide what is the true religion, what is the sound creed, slowly gets linked up with the view that decrees that each man pursues his own interest and yet achieves social good. The pursuit of one's own interest and treating each consumer as a sovereign are among the basic dogmas of capitalism. Prof. Tawney has argued that it is the same impulse that expresses itself in the Protestant religion and in the emergence of the capitalist society. It is the same impulse which travels from religion to economic life and from economic life to religious understanding.

Prof. Tawney has also shown how the Protestant religious upsurge synchronised with, if not preceded, the development of capitalism. The impulse was associated with the rise of commercial capitalism that fathered the development of industrial capitalism, which later flowered into finance capitalism. Protestantism is either associated with, or was the precursor of, the first two phases of capitalism. Tawney's thesis thus provides a footnote to the refinement of the Marxian idea that the economic basis determines the superstructure of thought, but other ideas—legal, philosophical, religious—have an independent, autonomous



role to play, and they in their turn interact, though the primary role belongs to the economic factor.

### AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

The complex inter-relationship explaining the rise of a culture can be found in that monumental work of Charles and Mary Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*. Here I must remind you of the fact that Charles Beard had written two other books, before he embarked on this great intellectual voyage of his. One was the *Economic Basis of Politics* and the other *The Economic Foundations of the American Constitution*. Why I am inviting your attention to these two books is to point out that he was among the first to popularise the concept of Economic Interpretation of History and to work out the influence of economic facts and factors on historical and cultural life of the U.S.A. Such a man, when he made a more detailed study, and came to the conclusion that while the economic factor is undoubtedly significant, a variety of other factors act and interact and the web of relationships alone uncovers the full pattern of American civilization.

In the U.S.A. the capitalist economy is so highly developed that a large percentage of industrial production is through big trusts and monopolies. There are however certain features of American life that are unrelated to the economic development but which play an important part in American society. For instance, the place of women in American society. Over sixty per cent, probably seventy per cent, of all the purchases made are made by women. Not only the purchases made for women, but those made for *men* as well, are done by women. The sales are therefore weighted with women's preferences. Let us take men's ties. If the ties were going to be purchased by men alone certain patterns and designs would sell more, say the design of sport requisites. Maybe that a lot of young men would like to buy such ties. But women would never choose them. They would prefer ties with lovely designs of a full moon, palm trees and the surge of the sea. A man will not touch such a tie ! But where the woman makes the purchases, the designs of the tie must meet her likes and dislikes.

In American life today not only the purchases are mostly made by women but increasingly property is passing into their hands. It is said that the most obedient husbands in the world

are to be found in the U.S.A. To be henpecked is a national characteristic ! This phenomenon of the importance that is given to women in the U.S.A., becomes an independent, significant and autonomous factor in the culture of that country. Characteristically in Charles and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization*, whole sections are devoted to the changing fashions of women's clothes ! The most progressive trade union in the U.S.A., the union that has played a leading part in politicalising the working class, is the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. It is a very powerful union, with a membership exceeding 5,00,000. Whenever an employer is sorely in need of money the union advances it to him to keep him in business !

No amount of study of capitalism can tell you why women have become so important in the U.S.A. or why a tie with a palm tree, moon and the surging sea will sell far more than a tie with sports designs ! These are things that the economic interpretation of history cannot explain. My point is that culture is made up of a variety of factors. All these factors act and interact, and some of these factors play an autonomous part. I deliberately gave you minor instances, instances that would arouse your amused curiosity but not encounter any emotional resistance from you..

### HUNGER AND CULTURE

Then the question of culture assumes importance from another angle. Where men have to struggle for their bread, where men are perpetually engaged in their pursuit of subsistence, they have no time, nor do they have the aptitude to develop culture. More often than not, culture has been the preoccupation of a small section of the people, the privileged section living upon the labour of the unprivileged. If culture is to become widespread, the threat of unemployment, the threat of poverty and starvation must be lifted from the people. Only in an economy of abundance can culture become broad-based. It is, therefore, argued that only socialist economy can make culture broad-based. Till then, culture will remain the privilege of a minority. Here again, there is a substratum of truth. There is no doubt that it would be almost futile to talk of culture, to talk of manners, morals and philosophical speculations, to a



man in the grip of the raw wants of life. Some of you probably remember the controversy between Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji. Tagore had said that Gandhiji in his pursuit of politics of the masses was sacrificing cultural gains and values, to which Gandhiji had replied that never had he seen birds singing when they were hungry. And if the people are to sing and chirp, their problems of food and work must be solved. This controversy between Gurudev and Gandhiji has been re-enacted from age to age, from country to country, though the contestants were never so eminent. There is a substratum of truth in what Gandhiji said, but there again it is possible to exaggerate it.

I would like to invite your attention to Chart I: Agrarian Life (10) which I have analysed into *family*, *property* and *contemplation*. Contemplation is the recognition of the fact that the key quest of life is to realise harmony within oneself, harmony with one's fellow-men and harmony between man and nature. The fundamental quest of man is to realise this threefold harmony. Tensions between men *inter se* tensions within man and conflicts between man and nature, man's dependence on soil, his organic relations with air and water, with the quivering life around him, these together constitute the core of human psychology. Wholeness of man is achieved only where he ceases to be at war with himself, at war with his fellow-men, at war with nature, where he recovers his traditional kinship and recaptures the feeling of continuity, the rhythm of harmony. All who have tried to chart the stormy sea of man's spirit have come to the conclusion that peace, poise, harmony, the blending of all notes, the stilling of tensions in a quivering equipoise, is the final achievement of man, the ultimate end of all quest.

This realisation of the unitive and the universal had become a part of Indian awareness. Even when the social organisation was cribbed and cabined by caste barriers, even when the load of feudal economy weighed down on the social fabric, the culture of the spirit had gone far. Man was scarcely restless, he was rarely a refugee from himself.

#### DIVISION AND INTEGRATION

The modern industrial economy is inimical to such poise and equilibrium. Nay, even more. The objective itself gets confused. Industrialism develops by snapping man's organic

links with soil and nature and by invading and abridging his personality. The unfolding of industrialism lay through division of labour. Division of labour undoubtedly "saves time" and increases efficiency, but by limiting man's skill and injecting monotony in his work. Who does not remember the famous illustration given by Adam Smith of division of labour? A pin, under division of labour, is manufactured by ninety workers, one drawing the wire, the second cutting it, another concentrating on the head, yet another sharpening the point and so forth. Each one confines his attention and effort to the same little thing. The price of increased production is abridging skill and draining work of its variety, initiative and "play." The essence of division of labour is to make work automatic, repetitive. Doing the same thing over and over again, that is the meaning of monotony. Have you ever tried to listen to a single-tuned theme? Ask your sister to play just one note, in a few minutes you will feel crazy. It is the blending of many notes that creates harmony.

There is another facet of division of labour. Means threaten to overpower man. The worker cannot manufacture a product from start to finish; from the standpoint of the consumer too, the product becomes increasingly difficult to master. As a result, the individual becomes increasingly dependent on production and on society as a whole, and relations get far more complex and interlocked than in any earlier society. Man feels intimidated by the complexity of the society around him.

Division of labour tends to limit man's self-expression in work and simultaneously increases the weight and complexity of social pressure on him. The human being is hemmed in from both the ends.

Industrialism strives to mechanise some of the organic needs of man. Man's social relations may experience restless change, but his biological needs are constant. The human organism can be regarded as constant. It is by nature confined within narrow limits of tolerance. In order to function, man's organism requires a specific temperature, a specific quality of climate, air, light, humidity and food. To function, in this context, means to preserve one's bodily equilibrium. Our organism needs contact with the earth and things that grow. Thus far man's body is subject to the laws of his animal life.



The march of industrialism loosens some of the organic links between man and nature. [For a detailed discussion of this point, ref. S. Griedion : *Mechanisation Takes Command.*] He is made rootless and foot-loose, not in the social dimension, but in his deepest biological foundation.

Industrialism creates complex social relations. And as a human being gets linked up with a host of other persons through a web of social relationships, he suffers from conflict of relationships, from absence of adjustment as well as a focus. The complex of society can bring inner richness only when it is accompanied by heightened powers of awareness and integration. Without such an advance, a disharmony develops between inner and outer life, and that disharmony becomes a strain and ends in *self-alienation*, a man at war with himself.

### THE COLLECTIVE

Industrialism's solution of the threat of disharmony is to gather the individual in the folds of a collective. Clip the wings, so that the desire of the sky is plucked out of the heart of the eagle or the dove. Instead of helping man to increase his powers of integration, industrialism is prone to limit its functions. To make the worker a cog in the machine his individuality has to be submerged in a collective. Man is swallowed up by the crowd. And it is the nature of a crowd, as Le Bon has amply shown, to reflect the lowest common denominator in men that compose it.

Industrialism enriches economically but vulgarises and impoverishes spiritually. This transformation has left few facets of life untouched. Surveying the development, Prof. Hans Kohn, in his recent book, *The Twentieth Century*, bemoans :

"Nationalism and socialism changed in the nineteenth century from liberal humanitarianism, from the emphasis on the dignity of the individual, to that on the power of the collectivities. What was true of the ethnic group was also true of the economic group."

The gains of industrialism can be assimilated, and its evils checked only by heightening the powers of integration in man, that is, through a greater culture of the self. It is the responsibility of socialism to be the medium of the self-culture achieved as a part of the new social organization.

Under capitalism, individual was reduced from a focus of complex relationships to the position of an *isolate*, always emotionally starved, anxiety-ridden, blue with fear of freedom. The flesh and blood man was abstracted as the Economic Man. The Economic Man responded not to the biological and psychic needs in him but to economic considerations. (The resultant debasement is brilliantly described by Eric Fromm in his *Fear of Freedom*.)

The proletariat, who sought to end the economic man, was himself a product of the same process. If the economic man, the *beau ideal* of capitalism, was an abstract person, the proletariat, the *beau ideal* of the enemies of capitalism, is also a fractionalised person. In a proletariat, as Marx pointed out, "the human being has lost himself." Both the Economic Man and the proletariat have to be superseded to discover and reclaim the fully harmonised individual.

Industrial technique with its emphasis on the conveyor belt strove to reduce man to a status where they would conform to the needs of the whirling belt. Such a distortion is not inherent in the technique of production. As Lewis Mumford has shown in his book, *Technics and Civilization*, neo-technique is capable of overcoming most of the ill-effects of the earlier and cruder forms of mechanisation.

As the technicians and captains of economy ignored the strains of the backwardness and crudeness on the spirit of man and sought only for the pursuit of profit, so a section of proletariat has ignored the issue of individual integration and self-culture and let the spirit of man get gathered up and enchained in the pursuit of quick and wide power.

#### VILENESS TO EXTERMINATE VILENESS

Against the early Communist poets like Ernest Toller who mined out of their sufferings and tragic experiences a deep social awareness and poignant art, who could write in his autobiography that self-searing sentence, "I died, was reborn, I died, was reborn, I was my own mother," there arose in the later Communist movement, *avant garde* abstractionists like Bertold Brecht, whom Ruth Fischer has aptly called "the minstrel of the G.P.U." If Toller's great achievement was *Masses and Man*, a humanist's



eloquent protest against absorbing man in collectives, Bertold Brecht's great play was *Die Massnahme*. In it the Director of the Party House warns the young revolutionaries :

"Then you no longer are yourselves. No longer are you Karl Schmitt of Berlin. You are no longer Anna Kyersk of Kazan, and you are no longer Peter Savich of Moscow. You are all without name or mother, blank leaflets on which the Revolution writes its orders."

The control chorus enunciates a new ethic :

"What vileness would you not commit to exterminate vileness ?

Could you change the world, for what  
would you be too good ?

Who are you ?

Sink into the mud,  
embrace the butcher, but  
change the world; it needs it."

The Communist movement has thus increasingly sought to take advantage of the totalitarian impulses inherent in modern industrial economy. To gain power, may be to change the order, the Communists have not scrupled to strengthen the totalitarian tendencies. "What vileness will you not commit to exterminate vileness ?"

In the growing complexity of industrial society in which, as Marx unforgettably described, man feels more and more the object of uncontrollable forces, alienated from reality instead of mastering and integrating it, Marx promised to restore to the individual the full wealth of his undivided personality. Many of his disciples who swear by him have betrayed this promises, repudiated the vision.

Men shivering in the old blast of freedom are gathered in the folds of collectives. The burden of thought and decision is lifted from them. The dark ocean of man's life is charted—and this easing of man's tensions, reconciling of his conflicts at the collective level, realised through the unfolding of factory technique and the conglomeration of urban life, produce a new type of being: the *mass-man*.

The totalitarian tendency is one that is in ascendance everywhere; the individual is made to feel meaningless and puerile at every step. Quantity, bigness, cult of force and volume of noise are apotheosised. The tender shoots of doubts and blossoms of yearnings get crushed under the sledge-hammer of bigness and force. Certainty and security are bought by bartering away breadth and freedom of understanding.

This development proceeds in most societies with some qualms and hesitations, but in communist states today it proceeds unashamedly. The discipline of education is nowhere wholly autonomous. Nowhere are the voyages of human mind and spirit wholly free. But the bonds were steadily loosening. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century freedom was becoming the norm, the ideal, that could not be attacked. Galileo's punishment visited few scientists in their search of knowledge outside the state's prescribed domain or the diocese determined by the church in later times. Only in Stalin's Russia ghosts of new Galileos question man's faith and mock his hopes. The need for freedom is challenged for the first time and freedom is so defined that it really means conformity.

Against this collectivist tendency inherent in present-day economy, against the distortion by Marx's disciples of his faith and promise, socialists must reaffirm their allegiance to humanism, testify to their faith in men as individuals, not as raw materials of organisation. Only by ceaseless accent on liberty and free personality can socialism restore to man the balance he needs for growth that economic developments threaten to upset. This testimony must be given regardless of the cost.

#### CULTURE AND POVERTY

That the poor engrossed in struggle against poverty have no time for culture is a favourite argument of social revolutionaries. Indifference to culture is given intellectual validity by stressing its relativity, its relationship with the economic foundation of social life. Cultural efflorescence, it is asserted, can only follow, not precede, the conquest of power by the working-class.

Both the above arguments are unwarranted exaggerations, and their acceptance would be fatal to the growth of the socialist movement.



Cultural process as also social awareness proceed hand in hand with economic development. To suggest that unfolding of culture can wait till the problems of economy are resolved is to put obstacles in the way of the building up of a positive state, in the way of the emergence of adequate social awareness. It is in fact to throw a spanner in the development of the socialist movement. Only the deepening of the cultural life of the masses enables them to respond to the urges and values of socialism.

It is wrong to suggest that masses, ground down by poverty and victims of exploitation, are unprepared for cultural foliation. At least in India we know that even in the feudal society, vital elements of culture did filter down to the working people. You have only to think of your grandmother to realise that illiteracy and poverty were no bar to the emergence of a devout culture of the self. If our ancients could impart profound cultural and social awareness to the people, why should that become an impossible adventure for our generation engaged in the final round of emancipation? Further, it is the distilled teaching of history that liberating philosophies and emancipating cultures are evolved by the oppressed alone. The proletariat, or the dispossessed, has ever been the virile carrier of culture. That is the conclusion majestically drawn from the massive survey of the morphology of cultures in Prof. Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Why should that fecundity disappear when the proletariat is engaged in the final lap of the epic struggle?

The oppressed, because they are oppressed, are able to endow the veins of their cultural awareness with the rich ore of universal sympathy and understanding.

Economic interpretation of history, in its crude form, does great harm because it makes all "truths" relative and the result is that ethics too become relative. The universal is drained out of the particular, the vein of culture is denuded of its precious ore. *Culture of the poor need not, unless we choose to make it so, suffer from poverty of culture.*

The socialist movement can get deepened and widened, its political articulations and economic experiments can be daring and fruitful only to the extent common people are suffused with cultural and social awareness. One can never gather figs from thistles !

## HEIRS OF CULTURE

Engels used to say that German Social Democracy was the heir to the great culture and philosophy of Germany. Social Democracy there stood on the shoulders of Kant, Fichte and Hegel.

In other countries too, the Marxists should be heirs to national culture, and they are wont to claim the heritage. But, in fact, little of national culture is reflected in their policy and ideology.

In Communist China, as the PTI Correspondent Shivarman's articles have recently shown, the Tao has no place. Taoism, so humanist and full of soil-wisdom, is the quintessence of China's cultural heritage. In New China, it is just so much junk to be jettisoned.

In India, no Marxist has so far cared to tell us what are the living and abiding aspects of our cultural heritage that will be cherished under Communism. No socialist movement can strike roots and grow sturdy in an ancient land like ours that ignores its vital founts of culture.

The indestructible elements of our culture that need to be cherished may be grouped under the following four heads :

(i) What Prof. Northrop in his stimulating study, *The Meeting, East and West*, has called aesthetic comprehension of knowledge. It is a part of our intellectual tradition to be concerned with the immediately apprehended factor in the nature of things. Apprehension is direct with all its aesthetic and emotive immediacy.

(ii) The search for unitive way of life through a path that is suffused with pantheistic awareness, or a search for unity in diversity carried on in a climate of growing kinship with the luxuriantly foliating diversity.

(iii) Elaboration of a pattern of social organisation that understands and responds to the rhythm of growth characteristic of nature. The concepts of *varna* and *ashram* at their highest and ideal best had the chaste simplicity as well as the vitality of the rhythm of Nature.

(iv) Simultaneous existence in the flux of time and in the terrain of eternity, of unchange.



These are profound truths that sharpen man's tragic dimension of life and highlight his broken umbilical cord with nature around him and man against him.

These truths were a part self-discipline, a part social organisation. As always happens the impulse of individual awareness and initiative was snuffed out by the weight and complexity of the social organisation. Without the sap of that impulse the green shoots have turned to dead wood. As Gurudev Tagore showed in his little story, *Tash Desh*, when the enlivening impulse is crushed only an oppressive edifice remains. The Indian society today is by and large a *Tash Desh*, but in its hoary history are entombed truths of universal validity that gifted individuals have rescued and renewed in their life. To rescue and unfold these ancient achievements, now much corrupted, is a part of the responsibility of our socialist movement.

#### FREEDOM AND ORGANISATION

The task of social culture and self-culture is to achieve a balance between individual initiative and the social whole. This balance is for ever unstable. Its dynamic, ever changing assertion is the responsibility of adequate culture-pattern and code of ethics. As Bertrand Russell has shown the forces of freedom and organisation need not be viewed as antithetic; they are, and have to be, complementary. The dynamic balance is achieved, by trial and error, by each man being helped to carry his burden of freedom. In history, there have been periods of over-emphasized freedom, and epoques of over-developed organisation. (I am using the words *periods* and *epoques* in the sense in which they were used by Charles Peguy, as phases of ascending and descending developments.) In each phase to provide the counteracting tendency is the responsibility of informed understanding. In our age, economy as well as politics threaten to arrest man's intimate impulses, to blunt his powers of initiative. Many a social problem has today become a problem of organisation. "The base of each, according to its kind," as Horace M. Kallen has recently pointed out, "is *stasis*. Stasis is what comes to pass when organisation hardens in whole or in part into hierarchy, and any of the diverse movements of human life are halted, dammed and immobilised." (*The Liberal Spirit*, 48). An Added emphasis on freedom therefore must become the dominant note of our socialism.

In our country separatist tendencies always threatened to break out, and that weakness often leads to a desire for firm grasp and strong organisation. Such a conclusion betrays a lack of appreciation of India's social history. Caste has been such a dominant social force, and its history shows that the compulsive unity achieved by it, with the motions of solidarity with fellow caste-men, and apathy and hostility towards all those beyond the boundaries of the caste, have checked the development in our people of the capacity for voluntary unions and consciously accepted disciplines. Rigid framework of social discipline was thought by our ancients as being helpful to efforts in self-culture. But in fact strong social bonds of long duration threaten to atrophy man's powers of initiative and adaptability. In India, therefore, a collectivist philosophy, pure and simple, will merely strengthen and feed on the old caste roots. The cultural climate here must be heavily surcharged with the urge for freedom.

Because economics of socialism tend to be centralising, its politics must be democratic and decentralised and culture liberating, if the tensions between freedom and organisation are to achieve a vital equipoise.



## Lecture VIII

### SOCIALISM AND CULTURE

You will remember that yesterday we discussed some aspects of socialism and culture. I tried to show you how the relationship is not unicasual, how there are a variety of forces and factors that go to make up culture; though the economic factor is an important factor, is probably a primary factor, it is not the decisive factor. Other factors are of autonomous importance: the legal framework or the political structure does exercise an influence on a society which is independent, up to a point, of the economic forces that may have helped to bring either the legal framework or the political structure into being.

I also tried to invite your attention to the fact that the totalitarians, on principle, refuse to recognise the autonomy of any sphere of life. It is the essence of democratic philosophy, as Jefferson was wont to aver, to provide as a rallying point, "the inalienable right to be different." It is the essence of a totalitarian philosophy to bring every aspect of life, every sphere of culture, under the control of the state of the party in power, in fine, to conform. In a one-party state, the government and the party, or the state and the party are interchangeable terms. Where no other political party exists, where people have not the liberty to criticise, oppose and change the government, the relationship between the state and the party is very different from the one that exists in a multi-party state. The state is controlled by the party. The economy is under the control of the state, therefore, under the control of the ruling party. Even in co-operatives, the officials are chosen at the instance of the dominant party. Where industries or farms are owned and operated by the state, the managers are appointed by the state directly. Even where trade unions exist, they too are controlled and operated by the party in power.

#### TRADE UNIONS

Only recently a valuable book, *Soviet Trade Unions*, has come out. The author is Issac Deutscher. This book is im-

portant because it discusses in details the controversy that was carried on in the Soviet Union over the place of trade unions in Soviet Society. Chapter II of the book discusses the first phase of the controversy "Trade Unions and the Revolution." Chapter III deals with the position of the trade unions under the New Economic Policy and Chapter IV deals with the position of the trade unions under the Soviet Planned Economy. The conclusion to which the author comes is that the trade unions have been reduced to a position of an appendage of the state apparatus. It is argued that in a Soviet state, as there are no employers and no owning class as such, there can be no danger of the workers being exploited. In a Soviet state there is no possibility of surplus value being extracted. Whatever surplus value is created is ultimately used for the welfare of the people as a whole. The tensions, the conflicts, the struggles that exist in the non-Soviet world, in a capitalist economy, in a feudal economy, in a semi-socialist economy as in Great Britain, no longer exist in a Soviet society, with the result that it becomes unnecessary for the trade unions to safeguard the collective rights of the workers. The functions of the trade unions in a Soviet state are deemed to be fundamentally different from the functions in other industrial societies. The trade unions become organisations for realising the targets of productions fixed for different factories. They become an instrument of the state to get from the worker the greatest possible co-ordination in the process of production.

[It would, however, be wrong to believe that the Soviet Trade Union members are without initiative or responsibility. In 1949, altogether more than nine million, or one-third of the total membership of the unions, were engaged in voluntary part-time work connected with the trade unions, social insurance (which is operated by the unions), factory inspection and the work of wages and welfare commissions. In 1948 more than 2,000,000 production meetings were held, at which 4,000,000 suggestions for rationalisation of labour and production were made by the union members].

#### IDEALIST SCHOOL.

This view is consistent with the political theory that inspires the actions of the communists. The theory's inarticulated major premise is that the general will, embodied in the state, is superior



to, more meaningful than, the actual wills of the individuals. This metaphysical theory of the state, apart from being a part of the Marxist thought-structures, has an independent history of its own. Students of political science know that a whole school of political philosophy developed in the nineteenth century which is known as the "idealist school." Men like Hegel, Green and Bosanquet developed a theory that considers state as the supreme embodiment of reason. The state is conceived as the supreme embodiment of what ought to be done, and what it does therefore has the quality of being rational.

Marx said, in his preface to the first volume of *Capital*: "The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell."

Why does Marx say that? Because the idealist writers like Green (*Political Obligations*) and Bosanquet (*The Philosophical Theory of State*) sought to idealise, to endow the then existing state with almighty powers and virtues. Hegel used to say that what exists is right and rational. The state was accepted as the highest embodiment of reason, and opposition to the dictates of the state was not just political treason but moral crime, as it involved a selfish conflict of a part with the whole.

This argument has a hoary history and is a favourite of all "enemies of open society." Plato, for instance, makes *The Laws* tell Socrates what guilt would be his if he sought to escape the cup of hemlock:

"Tell us, Socrates, what are you about? Are you not going to overthrow us, the laws, by your act, and the whole *polis*, as far as in you lies? Do you think that a city can exist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law are powerless, set upon and trampled by individuals?... Since you were brought by us to birth, nurtured and educated by us, can you deny that you are our offspring and our slave, as your fathers were before you?"

"What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the Laws speak truly, or do they not?"

In other words Socrates is in duty bound to accept every decision of the constituted authority, even though in this instance that authority is embodied in his venomous enemies, acting at the instigation of an ignorant tanner, who is motivated by personal malice towards him. And that particular authority is credited with being the integral part of everything for which Athens stands, of everything Athens has achieved, in such a way that even to evade its unjust judgment, even to fly away from the sentence of death it has imposed, is to do a grievous wrong, to be a traitor and be an enemy of his people.

Likewise, it is argued that anyone who upholds his actual will against the real will, not merely harms the society but harms himself. To accept the sovereignty of the state—the new *polis*—to accept not merely its primacy but its overlordship is to recognise the true and abiding interest of the individual and society.

Marx agreed with this view basically but differed on two essentials. "My dialectic method," wrote Marx, "is not only different from Hegel, but it is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the process of thinking is the demiurges of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of the *Idea*. With me, on the contrary, the idea is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." The necessary consequence was that the idealist view helped the capitalist state, which Marx sought to overthrow. Once, however, the dictatorship of the proletariat is established, Marx had little hesitation in accepting the formulation. While he rejected the analysis of the idealist writers for the capitalist state, he held the logic valid for a proletarian state.

#### PLURAL STATE

Democratic socialists reject the philosophical theory of state. There may be a short period, of a year or two, when the state may have not merely primacy but a place of over-arching importance. For instance, in Nepal today, surely the new people's state that is sought to be built up cannot afford to be squeamish about rights of individuals. If it is, the revolution might be lost; but after a brief phase of transition, it should be possible to limit the powers of the state. And that limitation will be the best of the freedom won.

Socialists oppose the overlordship of the state and as against



the philosophical theory propound the pluralist theory of state. The pluralist theory argues that the state is just one among many organisations in a society. You will remember that I argued a while back that a human being is not just one person but is an *ensemble* of personalities. It was my effort to show to you that a human being expresses himself through a variety of relationships. And every relationship is as important to him as other relationships, because these relationships together make up the richness of his personality. You as a worker working in a factory, you as a citizen staying in a particular locality, you as a member of a youth organisation, as a member of a trade union, as a member of a cultural organisation, you as a father, as a son, as a husband, form a complex of relationships, and each of the relationships is vital to you, and to the extent these relationships are unconstrained, are autonomous, to that extent your personality is free and spontaneous. If such freedom and spontaneity are to exist in a society, there will have to be proliferating associations. Trade unions, youth organisations, the churches, literary associations, community centres, political parties,—these and other organisations are as significant, relevant for self-expression, as the state. While the state will have primacy, *it cannot have supremacy*.

The pluralist theory, therefore, argues that we must view the society as a web of associations, and the state cannot violate the autonomy of other organisations. The powers of the state have to be limited. They are limited by the fact that other organisations have their own autonomous significance and hence their own independence. Man as a citizen may find expression through the state, but the same person as a worker will need a trade union to give his functional relationships a focus and meaning. (The pluralist view has been ably outlined by a variety of writers and its historical development is traced by Prof. Elliott in his book, *The Pluralist Revolt in Politics*.) The pluralist conception of state is one of the main pillars of the edifice of democratic socialist thought.

In the industrial society, man individually is apt to feel powerless. Even in villages, once impersonal forces of the market reach and shape the texture of men's life, events can be influenced only by organisations. To be free it is necessary that the organisation should not be just one—the state—but

many and varied to articulate a variety of social relationships, and provide checks and balances. Those of you who are familiar with the philosophy that went into the drafting of the constitution of the U.S.A. will remember that a great emphasis was put on checks and balances. The theory of separation of powers laid down that no power be permitted to become supreme. If any one power becomes supreme, liberties of the people disappear. It is the business of a political scientist to so devise a machinery and so develop a philosophy that no one power will be supreme and unchallenged. Then alone are the liberties of the people safe. That is the reason why Prof. Laski, doyen of pluralist philosophers, wrote, in his major work, *A Grammar of Politics*, that it would be of lasting advantage to political science if the concept of sovereignty were surrendered.

#### HOME AND CAUSE

"The community is not only the living together of the inclusive group, it is also the bracket that contains all the non-centralised and endlessly variant activities of its members. In the community a man finds his larger home, the home of his people. But also in that community he cherishes and works for his faith, whatever causes are dear to him. The faiths of those who share the same community are different faiths. In other words, there are two distinct kinds of attachment here, and in a modern society it is most important that they should not be falsely identified, as is done by the totalitarians. There is the attachment to the home in the larger sense, the social home, the sentiment for which embraces both the home folk and habitation of the folk. And there is the attachment to the cause, the faith, the cultural values to which we are most attached. Man needs both these attachments. The home is the transcendence of the individual, the primary fulfilment of his social being. The cause goes beyond personal relationships, it is the expression of man's relation not to his folk but to life itself, in a sense of his relation to the universe.

"In primitive life the home and the cause were one. The diversities of the cause were still unknown. What you did for the home you did for the cause. No government



strove to make the two into one, they were so by the nature of things. But now when government claim to determine the cause as well as to regulate the home, it turns the home into a prison. A man's faith is no longer the badge of his citizenship. It is the high virtue of democracy that, when it is not corrupted, it upholds the distinction. The different faiths must grow side by side and the adherents of them all must reap their different harvests . . .

"The two kinds of attachments are complementary. The attachment to the group satisfies the social sense and irradiates emotional warmth. But it lacks content and the potentiality of development unless it is combined with the attachment to the cause. If it is pursued with exclusive devotion it becomes narrow and poverty-stricken. This is true on every level, including the national. And that is why the excessive stress on the bond of nationality is so vainglorious and empty. It can have no goal but greater power and enlargement. It exaggerates the extrinsic, the relative. It becomes the herd vision of greater glory, the glory of trampling others down. Against its menace we need to develop the social sense of intrinsic values, the fulfilment of the way of life. The worth of the cause must be magnified alongside the worth of the group—and the two must never be identified." (R. M. MacIver: *The Web of Government*.)

This indictment of nationality can also be made of single pointed devotion to a class or a political party, that too makes life narrow and poverty-stricken and converts the home into a prison.

#### TOTALITARIANISM AND CULTURE

The autonomy of other aspects of life is invaded and everything is brought under the total control of the state. Even science is brought under the control of the state. Now, science has its own discipline. There is no doubt that science is influenced by economic conditions it encounters, as is emphasized by the Marxists. Take the development of steam. Two thousand years before Stephenson discovered the secret of steam engine, it was known to some experts. But it would have been impossible to make use of that knowledge, until economic developments had

taken place. For instance, till coal as a fuel had been discovered and economic relationships had developed to a stage where capital resources were available to build steam engines and make use of the additional production that would flow from it. It was necessary to have surplus workers. In a primitive society the discovery of steam engine could have been only of theoretical significance. Similar arguments may be applied to a host of other inventions. Science can progress only in so far as the surrounding economic conditions will permit its growth. It is equally true that science in capitalist society is constantly hampered, hamstrung by capitalist property relations. If by spending a few crores of rupees a formula could be found whereby automobiles would run not on gasoline but on water it would be the effort of the petroleum companies to see that such researches are stopped or frustrated. Oil companies have invested billions of dollars in their industry, and they are not anxious to go out of business! This indictment is undoubtedly true. But after we have conceded both these points, the fact remains that science has its own discipline. A scientific truth has validity not because Mr. A says it or Mr. B approves it, or because so many persons have voted for it, but because it can be verified. Neither authority nor unaided reason is sufficient. Scientific knowledge must be public knowledge in a philosophical sense—that is, it must be capable of being checked by any others who have acquired the necessary skill and experience and technique. To facilitate such checking, it is not enough for a research worker to publish merely his results and conclusions: he must also publish an account of the data from which he drew the conclusions, and the methods which he used to obtain his data. Nothing is given on authority. Yesterday, I drew your attention to the Pope's call to all Catholics to believe in the new miracle of Virgin Mary—her bodily assumption to heaven. You cannot argue against, you cannot challenge, this dogma. You have to accept it! Such an acceptance becomes the proof of your belief in the Catholic religion, of your loyalty to the Mother Church. But when a scientist says, for instance, that two particles of hydrogen and one particle of oxygen when brought together form water, it might sound like a miracle, but you can, in the laboratory, make the experiment and satisfy yourself that two particles of hydrogen and one particle of oxygen do produce a drop of water. Here is something that can be tested and proved. There is no need to take on trust or accept the word of an authority.



## TOTALITARIANISM AND SCIENCE

In Soviet Russia, or wherever totalitarian philosophy has been accepted, as was the case in Nazi Germany, in Fascist Italy, and as is likely to happen in Mao's China, the discipline of science is not recognised. The truths of science are sought to be determined by the dictates of the state. An arresting case study is provided by what has come to be known as Soviet genetics. (Ref. Julian Huxley: *Soviet Genetics*.) You will find there that the politbureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, that is, the highest organ of the state, decided which theory in genetics was right and which was wrong! Just imagine Jawaharlal Nehru deciding which theory is right and which is wrong, and that decision becoming a scientific truth! And any one who refuses to accept the truth, as laid down by the politbureau, is not only a scientific heretic, but a traitor to the state and as such liable to the sternest punishment, as Vovilov and Deborin discovered to their cost. Physicists propound two theories of matter—the wave theory and the particle theory. Both the theories are being examined and no final decision has been made. Supposing our friend here, Prof. Dandawate, were to come forward and suggest a third theory, whether his theory is right or wrong will be discussed and decided by researches and controversies in the scientific world. Now suppose Dandawate, as the Secretary of the Socialist Party, were to say that his theory is the sound one, and any one who propounds the wave theory or the particle theory is not only scientifically wrong (which he may have the right to say), but is also anti-socialist, anti-proletarian state, you can realise in what a mess we will find ourselves! If Com. Dandawate were to usurp such powers, it would be denounced as fantastic and criminal; when Com. Zhdanov usurps such an authority, it becomes the quintessence of wisdom and propriety!

## —AND LITERATURE

The following extract from the *Handbook for Entrants* (1948 edition) illumines the position of literature:

“A profound and full acquaintance must be shown by candidates with the outstanding models of Soviet literature and the important guiding documents on literary questions—the ordinance of the Communist Party Central

Committee on literary questions and Zhdanov's report on the journal's *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*; this is one of the principal requirements in conducting examinations in literature."

The implications are well brought out by Slonim:

"In the maze of political tactics and dramatic changes in Russian life, Soviet criticism is hardly ever enlightening. It is highly significant that, except for a few evasive and pedestrian chapters in some text books, not a single general survey of post-Revolutionary literature has been published in the U.S.S.R. Communist literary policy apparently underwent so many violent shifts of taste that nobody has dared to write a history of Soviet literature. Such an enterprise is conceivable only outside of the Soviet Union." (Marc Slonim: *Modern Russian Literature*.)

It is not an accident that the two foremost poets of the Revolution, Essenin and Mayakovsky, committed suicide, and the two leading novelists of Soviet Russia, Pilnaik and Zamiatin, were exiled or executed.

#### THEN MUSIC

Some three years back a big controversy raged in the Soviet Union on the type of music to be produced. The people undoubtedly have a right to say what is good music and what is bad music, as the musicians too have the right to say what is good and what is bad music. You all know, there some who want to listen to classical music, but 90 per cent of the people prefer the Goa Radio which broadcasts the latest film songs. If nine out of ten prefer film music, that music must find a place in the radio programme. But how far these 90 per cent of the people have the right to tell Faiz Khan that what they appreciate is alone music and that what Faiz Khan cares for is no music at all? It would be equally stupid for the state to tell Faiz Khan what is good music and what is bad music. Music has its own discipline. Musicians, if they want that their musical creations should play a cultural part,—and they must play a cultural part,—will have to take into consideration the likes and dislikes, the aptitudes and antipathies, of the people. We cannot have music only for a selected coterie, thought it too has a value, because, after all, there must be music for the talented few as for the vast mass of people, and it should be the effort of the experts to raise the musical appreciation of the



people to a more evolved stage—to the classical level while satisfying their needs for music. How is it to be done? There the musicians, the people, representatives of the government, all will have to sit together and discover ways and means of raising the musical level of the people. Also, ways and means will have to be found for enlisting music in the task of national construction. But would it be proper for the state to say what is the right music and what is wrong music and dictate to the musicians as to what type of orchestral themes will be taken up, what orchestrations will be attempted? That musicians should be organised will be readily accepted, but should that organisation be presided over by a member of the government, who is not a musician and who looks at the problem from a political point of view? Is the discipline of the music to be subordinated to the claims of the state? These questions arose in the Soviet Union when Zhdanov and the Central Committee of the CPSU told world-renowned musicians like Shostakovich and Prokofiev what to write, dictated to them the scrolls of their creations. (Ref. Alexander Werth: *Musical Uproar in Moscow*.)

Lest you go away with the feeling that these developments are only recent, and thereby dismiss them as Stalinist aberrations, I would like to draw your attention to a book that was written, if I mistake not, in 1924 or 1925 by Max Eastman, a friend and admirer of Lenin and Trotsky. That book he had aptly called the *Artist in Uniform*. It is the essence of totalitarianism to put the writer, artist, educationist, social worker into uniform, to destroy the autonomy of every sphere of life, to bring all fields of thought under the control of the state.

#### BURDEN OF FREEDOM

It is argued by the Communists that during the period of transition—and the period of transition may last for any number of years (according to Stalin, the period of transition will last till there is any capitalist state left in the world; when all capitalist states have been defeated, there will be vestiges of capitalism to be overcome; after that is achieved there will still be vestiges of capitalist psychology, which, one does not know how many years it will take to remove)—the Communist Party must remain supreme! That, to my mind, is a very dangerous proposition. It has been my basic contention that truth resides only in the people. Through their associative efforts alone can people understand what is good

for them. Philosophers may suggest what is good; scientists may assist, but the people alone, through their stumbling efforts, can realise as myriad individuals, what is right and what is wrong. No one has the authority to put the strait-jacket on the people, least of all a politician!

But under the Communist philosophy for a period of 100 years or more the state, rather the ruling party, is to be entrusted with the supreme authority of determining every aspect of life and culture. The pluralist theory of state, therefore, demands that science will have its own autonomy, music will have its own autonomy, art will have its own autonomy. Autonomy does not mean that science, or music, or art has not social function and social responsibility. Autonomy does not mean that any particular activity or any particular sphere of life can say that is supreme. The right that we deny to the state, the right that we deny to the political party, we shall not concede to any other activity or any other organisation! If the church tries to become supreme, we shall have to fight it. That is the reason why socialists have been anti-clericals, resisting the all-encroaching claims of the church. Doctrines and disciplines are, or should be, agents not masters.

There is a little book of Prof. Hans Kohn called *The Prophets and the People*, wherein an effort is made to describe the character of a people, the texture of a nation, through the personality of a single artist. For different countries different artists have been chosen, and by analysing the philosophy, the literary genius and the outlook of that writer the character of his nation is sought to be brought out. That book offers Dostoevsky as the authentic representative of the Russian people. In Dostoevsky's famous novel, *Brothers Karamazov*, there is the oft-quoted discussion between brothers, Ivan and Alayosha, on what happens when Jesus Christ reappears in Spain during the period of the Inquisition. The Inquisition, as you know, was the instrument devised by the Catholic Church to put down heresy within its folds. Any new idea that came up, any exponent of a new idea, was brought before the Inquisition and if the idea was found to be inconsistent with the teaching of the Catholic religion as laid down by the Catholic hierarchy, the Inquisition not only condemned the idea but punished by imprisonment or execution the author of the heresy. Before the Inquisition Jesus Christ is brought. He is charged, for his unyielding emphasis on individual freedom and human responsi-



lity, with the crime of subverting the authority of the Church. The Grand Inquisitor argues and admonishes him: "Why have you come to spoil the great work that you have done?" The old man on the bench continued, "You want people to be free. But do you realise that the people are tired of freedom? Do you realise that this is a burden which the people cannot carry? We are here to carry the burden for the people; we are trying to carry the Cross of the People, for freedom is a curse which is too heavy for a man to bear." Dostoevsky saw far, and saw the shape of things to come. He saw how miracles turn to mirage.

Socialism would be meaningless if men were to be freed of the cross of freedom. For it is the essence of socialism that man should recognise freedom not as a burden but as the highest blessing.

It is often argued that to a starving man bread and work alone are meaningful; of what value can freedom be to him? In fact that is the severest indictment of the present society. It permits, nay compels, men to barter away their supreme good, freedom, without much hesitation. The quest of socialism will remain arid so long as men seek in it the satisfaction of the hungers of capitalism alone. Only when the deeper chords of being are stirred that the profounder aspects of socialism are understood. "A system which claims to be the negation of that negation of humanity which is involved in capitalism itself," said Karl Marx, "is not sufficient to supersede it in any positive sense. In order to achieve the realisation of socialism, the movement established for the purpose, becoming conscious of its humanist aims, must transform progressively the crude demand for property into a superior demand for a new order, for an order in which man can again believe in man." (Quoted by H. de Man: *La Idee Socialiste*, 487.) What we call freedom however disappears, or becomes what the state decides, where the Communist Party rules. And that is highly dangerous because, not only it fails to further the impulses that are basic to socialism, but because it strengthens the totalitarian impulses peculiar to our industrial society, that every humanist should be anxious to check.

#### MARXIAN VIEW

I would now like to invite your attention to the book, *Human Nature: The Marxian View*. It is probably the ablest presentation of the orthodox Marxian point of view about human nature,

A pregnant remark made by Marx is given here: "But the human essence is not abstraction, inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the *ensemble* of the social relations." Human essence is the bringing together, the coming together, of a variety of social relations. You will recollect that I gave a similar definition of a human being. I said that he is not one person but an *ensemble* of personalities and I explained personalities as various relationships. Though the definitions appear to be alike, the meanings put in these definitions are very different. I have been discussing so far the pluralist conception of human nature. The Marxian "nature" is different. I would like you to understand that too.

Prof. Vernon Venable's book is so ably written and its various arguments hold together so well that any effort to give a summary of it is bound to do injustice to the brilliance of his thesis.

Firstly, it is argued that human nature is to a great extent conditioned by the economic circumstances. Secondly, the economic conditions operate in human beings through the mechanism of the classes. Thirdly, the economic forces also operate upon human beings through the mechanism of division of labour. The emancipation of human beings ultimately lies in greater and greater utilisation of science for the development of the economy. Human nature evolves, changes. There is no such thing as a permanent, irreducible, human nature. Human nature is the *ensemble* of social relationships. As these social relationships change, human nature changes. The prevailing social relationships are shaped by economic conditions, the organisation of production and the configuration of property rights. Now, how do these forces operate? They operate through the medium of classes. So long as class society exists, human nature will remain distorted. This imperfection is further accentuated by division of labour. You will recollect that I had pointedly drawn your attention to the flaming passages in *Capital* where Marx indignantly denounces the degradation of man, under capitalism, to the position of a cog in the machine. I had also pointed out to you that both Marx and Lenin visioned a society wherein men not only will not be cursed with monotonous work but will have developed their capacities and faculties so far as to be master of many arts. Every man a Leonardo da Vinci! The ultimate picture of society that Marx and Lenin had was in no way different from the one that had



excited the imagination and fired the enthusiasm of Utopian writers like Fourier.

The ravages of division of labour and the ravages of class society on human nature have to be ended and that can only be done through economic progress; it is possible only when the proletarian state is established, and the rest of the familiar argument follows.

With a large part of these arguments I am in agreement. There is not the least doubt that division of labour, the division of society into classes, the development of economic life, the organisation of productive forces, the arrangement of property relations—all these undoubtedly influence and shape human nature. But my differences are on three cardinal points.

#### MY DIFFERENCES

Firstly, there are other autonomous forces that also operate, for instance, your own ideas. If you accept the totalitarian philosophy, you will treat human nature as raw material only. When Kant said that every man is an end in himself and that no man can be treated as a means, he called it a Categorical Imperative. That no human being has a right to use another person to achieve his ends, even ends surcharged with social significance, becomes the corner-stone of humanism. Now, this might appear as a sterile philosophical discussion. But it is not. In the Soviet Union, for instance, collectivisation of agriculture was put through without the consent of the peasants. Forced collectivisation led to a man-made famine, wherein a large number of people perished. Is it right for a government to put through forced collectivisation which the people do not support, even though the collectivisation may be in the ultimate interests of the people? Would the Socialist Party be entitled to eliminate say 50 million people from India through man-made famine in order that agricultural life in them may be rationally organised and peasants made prosperous? Have 350 million people the right to use 50 million people as means to an end, however noble the end may be?

The agriculturists who were destroyed were not all landlords. If a policy of forced collectivisation resulted in the destruction of life and property, in piling misery upon common working people, are we entitled to impose upon the people miseries that they may

not accept of their own free will? Often in the progress of social life human beings have not only to accept misery but to invite misery. The 220,000 textile workers of Bombay accepted hardship and misery for two months but it was not imposed upon them but was voluntarily accepted. I have not the least doubt that for building up the India of our dreams, our people will have to accept a lot of hardships, but I would like them to accept them voluntarily, that is, through the processes of democracy. In the Soviet Union these hardships, though they were socially necessary, were imposed upon the people without eliciting their consent and co-operation. This question, therefore, of to what extent the state has a right to impose upon citizens policies that are framed without their consent, becomes a problem of major importance. If you accept the orthodox Marxist analysis of human nature, and if you also accept the Marxian theory of state, logically and inevitably you concede to the state the right to impose sacrifices upon the people. I do not accept that analysis of human nature, because I said that your ideas, your other associations, to the extent you recognise them and give them autonomy, also influence human nature. You will remember both Marx and Engels later on clarified their position and pointed out that they had been misunderstood by a majority of their disciples in suggesting that the economic factor was the determining factor. It was clarified that other factors do count and there is a web of interaction. Similarly, in understanding human nature, it is necessary to realise that however important the economic factor or the class basis may be, there are other considerations and ultimately it is the web of inter-relations that shapes human nature.

My second point is more important, and it is not often made in socialist discussion: *There are certain absolutes.* The core of Marxian view of human nature is that it is essentially relativist. Human nature may be "X" in a particular circumstance, it will become "Y" in a different set of circumstances. There is nothing that you can call as absolute, because, no social relation is so. Marxian definition therefore says that it is an *ensemble* of social relations. There is nothing abstract. He would go further and say that there is nothing absolute. It is ever changing, always in flux. It is my contention that human nature is partly relative and partly absolute. There are certain parts of human nature and certain aspects of ethics, defining relations between man and man, that never change. Throughout history, while men's ideas have



changed on other things there has been a segment of thought which has shown stubborn unchangeability. Aldous Huxley has written an interesting book called *The Perennial Philosophy*. We may not accept the thesis of Huxley,—though I am inclined to accept it to a great extent,—but we are unlikely to get a better phrase than “perennial philosophy” to describe the segment of thought under review. Human thought and travail have discovered a bedrock of abiding truth. On that point I would like to invite your attention to a searching discussion made by Prof. Henry Bamford Parkes. His book is called *Marxism—A Post-mortem*. I have space here for only a brief quotation:

“All value judgments are regarded as dependent upon some particular economic and social system. What Marxists fail to recognise is that there are two different kinds of morality. Morality means, in the first place, a system of ethical prohibitions, regulating such matters as property and sexual relationships and having as its purpose the ordering and preservation of society. There is no sharp distinction between this kind of morality and, on the one hand, written law and, on the other, the accepted code of manners and social customs. In savage societies, in fact the three are identical. Morality in this sense is a product of social conditions, and changes when society changes; thus one can appropriately speak of feudal morality, of bourgeois morality, of proletarian morality. Morality means also, however, that ordering and disciplining of emotions, that achievement of self-harmony and self-control, that recognition of the independent rights and reality of other men, which has been recognised in all ages as the finest fruit of civilisation. To that extent human beings achieve this second kind of morality, they transcend the laws and the prohibitions of society, both accepting them and also becoming capable of judging them. Obedience to the law, as Saint Paul proclaimed, is bondage; but by passing beyond the law, men achieve moral autonomy and they become free. Freedom, in fact, is both the necessary condition and the result of morality.” (pp. 175-178.)

If you accept all morality as relativist, there is no absolute standard. It leads you ultimately to the Hegelian fallacy that the real is rational, what exists is right. You have no frame of reference for judging things.

We must have in morality, in human nature, in political affairs, certain abiding principles. Thousands of years of Man's pilgrimage through life have discovered a few such absolutes. This perennial philosophy outlines self-culture, the autonomy of individuals, the sacredness and inviolability of human personality. Such a self-culture becomes necessary because man is a meeting point of tensions. Man is interrelated, but he is never wholly accounted for by, wholly absorbed in, his society. The relations a man weaves with others are always viewed by him from one side of the relationship. He co-operates with a difference, and therefore he competes as well. There is thus a potential conflict, and ineluctable tension, in every relationship. In short every individual is interrelated yet self-enclosed. The basic theme of human life is *the adjustment of the ego interest and the group interest*. Socio-economic and ethico-political changes stress variations, embroider innovations on this deep-seated theme. Marx, in his enthusiasm, forgets the theme in the variations that is socialism, and that slip has created the Stalinist nightmare!

The third point that needs to be remembered is that the social unit is always a self, a focus of being, an individuality. Truths and values are not incarnated in any unity but only in the units. Social or political unity is a convenient fiction, the reality is always the individual.

The above reservations are stubborn and to a great extent non-historical. They make it necessary to restrain politics of socialism with the astringent touch of absolutist ethics. These are the considerations that prompt some humanists to aver that socialism, to be true, must be a *residence of values*. Socialism is not bread and circus, not even milk and honey, but a unitive way of life, the satisfactory social framework wherein the deeper tensions of life can find poise, point of stillness and abiding harmony.

### A GREAT CONTRADICTION

Professor Bohm Bawark and a host of other economists have drawn attention to "the great contradiction" in Marxian economics. None so far has drawn attention to the great contradiction in Marx's social philosophy. In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx made a gallant effort to resolve the great contradiction of his economics, the contradiction between the labour theory of value and the falling rate of profit. But nowhere has Marx tried



to resolve the contradiction in his social philosophy and that has led to "big, blooming, buzzing confusion" in the ranks of his followers.

Marx has used humanised society and socialised men as interchangeable terms. In his vision, there are passages where men enjoy a libertarian heritage and also other passages where men are dominated by a leviathan, whether of a class or a party. Not to maintain the distinction is to blur the basic outlines of socialism.

Yearning for union and unity is among the deepest emotions in man. He is ever an isolate, a refugee eager to return to his home. In the early phase of the ascent of man, the tribe provided a natural, instinctive home and shelter. It was an anchor that was not consciously accepted, but came naturally. An individual was a part of a tribe, he was a cell of a tribal organism. Individuality, as Barbara Spofford Morgan has shown in her book, *Individuality in a Collective World*, is a social achievement. Man is not born an "individual," he has to achieve and assert his individuality through tragic experiences and heroic efforts. Atavistic impulses are strong. There is a constant tendency for man to slip back into the tribal security. In society, as in nature, there is no reversal of the process of evolution. Atavistic impulses are, therefore, in the final analysis, frustrating. There is now no retreat from freedom for man; with the first bite of the fruit of knowledge, the bliss of ignorance is irrevocably lost.

Man's quest for union and unity has to be realised by his conscious effort at integration. The goal is reached by no easy process of absorption, but by the deliberate effort at orchestration. Mystics are wont to contrast union with God on man's level and on God's level. The former is a deception and distortion, the latter alone is fruition and realisation. So too in man's quest for his fully bloomed individuality: it cannot end by returning to the womb of the totem and the tribe, it has to be earned by a process of integration achieved through rational social order and self-culture. The two phases are not the same.

In Marx the ending of the self-alienation, that capitalism engenders, is achieved in either of the two ways by tribal absorption and vital orchestration. Such a confusion is disconcerting.

The confusion is all the more dangerous when it is realised that the developments of the technique of production must depress

the status of man, unless he is simultaneously able to extend his powers of comprehension and assimilation. The accelerating progress of technology is well brought out by a recent writer of great insight and audacity:

"We have here the explanation of the 'inscrutable' propensity of all technological devices to proliferate. This propensity is characteristic not of man but of tools. . . . . Furthermore, it follows that the more tools there are, the greater is the number of potential combinations. If we know nothing of history but had somehow come to understand the nature of our tools, we could infer that technological development must have been an accelerating process, almost imperceptibly slow in its earlier stages and vertiginously fast in its most recent phase. This is, of course, the observed fact. Mr. H. G. Wells, with his gift for dramatizing history, has remarked that the entire development of civilization (as distinguished from "savagery") has occurred within roughly one hundred generation, which is perhaps not more than one-hundredth part of the experience of the race. The machine age occupies not more than one-tenth part of this period, the mass-production age, one one-hundredth. The old stone-age was of prodigious length; the new stone-age was much shorter but still many times longer than the whole of subsequent history. Archaeologists and historians are well aware of this fact. Indeed, it is one of their persistent puzzles. But it is a puzzle to which the analysis of mechanical invention now provides a key. The tool itself is the key to the great mystery." (C. E. Ayres: *The Theory of Economic Progress*, 119.)

For this eloquent Veblenite, "the tool-combination principle is indeed a law of progress." The pressure of tool-combination must be matched by progress of man's powers of comprehension and assimilation, that is, by his unitive awareness or *else tools harness men*. Mass-production, unless accompanied not merely by a new social order but a new culture of the self, must lead to the emergence of mass-men.

Marx had a glimmer of this fact, but he preferred not to insist on it. The result has been the distortion of his dream into the nightmare of Stalinist totalitarianism: the tool has swallowed up the man in Marxism too!



## UTILITY OF UTOPIANISM\*

The above arguments lead to the necessity of utopianism. It provides a measuring rod for the achievements, a perch from which to gain an all-inclusive view. Marx once said that "the anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape." The truth the remark embodies is of pervasive significance. Marx's *critique* of capitalism was unrivalled because he viewed it, as Shaw and Cole have shown, from beyond its confines. The generalised version of the truth is, that only by transcending the framework can one adequately judge its contents. Utopianism, with its vein of idealism, provides a frame of reference for judging the adequacy or otherwise of socialist extremists.

The promise of the new society must be lived, here and now, in some association; in the chosen party at all events, if it is the instrument of social emancipation. Class struggle may distort a society, but ranks of the party must be irradiant with vital comradeship. The utopian view of the world where the state has withered away must be reflected, however dimly, in the folds of the party. For what the acorn lacks, the oak can never possess. It is here that the Marxian's intoxication with history, his sense of inevitable ends and iron laws, proves defective. The self-culture for such a man is limited to the single virtue of obedience to the proletarian authority. In reality, the truth of one's being comes out when one realises, in every gesture, that one is not merely an element of social saturation (a carrier of social revolution) but the key crystal without which social crystallisation (post-revolution social reconstruction) cannot be affected. And that does not mean to want to be the leader,

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\*In the above analysis the term utopianism is used in a sense different from one given to it by Engels. For him it was a derogatory expression, for us it is a vitally significant term. Our use of it comes closest to the sense given to it by Prof. Martin Buber.

Historically, the meaning given by us cannot be justified. In a recent exhaustive survey of ancient, medieval and modern utopias, Marie Louise Berneri has come to the conclusion that most utopia-writers, with the exception of a few like Diderot and Morris, were authoritarians. That most utopias are system-bound and not liberating paths is the conclusion arrived at in Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia*. Notwithstanding the above obstacle, I have used the term utopianism in the sense given to it by Buber because I believe, it is possible, nay necessary to rescue the word from "the enemies of free society".

though it does mean to want to be a man. That is very much simpler and very much harder.

Perhaps some of you are asking yourself what this ethical *hocus pocus* has to do with the struggle for socialism. Social justice can never be divorced from consideration of "ought." Solidarity with mass misery and social awareness are essential but not enough. There must be the deep feeling of humanity. "Determined revolutionary activity coupled with a deep feeling for humanity," wrote Rosa Luxemburg, "that alone is the real essence of socialism. A world must be overturned, but every tear that flows and might have been stanchd is an accusation; and a man hurrying to a great deed who knocks down a child out of unfeeling carelessness commits a crime."

That socialism alone deserves, "not merely our vote, but our life itself," as Rosa Luxemburg puts it, which envisions a society of integrated and fully responsible individuals united in liberty and free harmony.



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An Academy for the study of Indian Culture with special reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*. Classes conducted at the Bhavan and 19 centres. Examinations for the Gita Vid and Gita Visharad Diplomas are conducted and scholarships, medals and prizes are given to successful candidates.

### 3. MUNGALAL GOENKA SAMSHODHAN MANDIR :

A Post-graduate & Research Institute recognised by the University of Bombay for research for Ph.D. & M.A.

#### Departments

(a) Sanskrit Shikshapith; (b) Singhi Jain Sahitya Shikshapith; (c) Narmad Gujarati Shikshapith; (d) Bhagavad Dharma Shikshapith.

#### Facilities

Scholarships and free guidance to deserving scholars.

### 4. BHARATIYA ITIHASA VIBHAG: (Dept. of Indian History)

The Bharatiya Itihasa Vibhag was organised in 1944. The Vibhag's 10-Volume scheme of "History & Culture of the Indian People" is a monumental work designed to give a comprehensive and authentic, balanced and up-to-date account of India's History and Culture through the ages.

### 5. MUNSHI SARASVATI MANDIR: (An Institute of Culture)

#### Departments

(a) Library with about 60,000 printed volumes, including rare Indological volumes and a Children's section; (b) Museum consisting of ancient and valuable manuscripts, paintings, bronzes, etc.; (c) All-India Cultural Essay Competition; (d) Bharatiya Sangit





**Shikshapith**—An Academy of Music for teaching and conducting research in Music—affiliated to the National Academy of Hindustani Music, Lucknow, teaching for Intermediate and Graduate courses.

6. **BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA**—An Academy of Arts and Dramatics, including a School of Dancing.

7. **MUDRAN AUR PRAKASHAN MANDIR :**

As a first step towards establishing an Academy of Printing, Bhavan has acquired Messrs. Associated Advertisers & Printers—one of the biggest presses in Bombay.

(a) This department publishes the results of the research work of the Bhavan, the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and the Munshi Sahitya (b) *The Book University*—Under this scheme, books—ancient and modern—are published in a uniform size and at a low price with a view to make the best literature and classics of India and the world available to the common man in easily understandable form.

8. **DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALS AND PERIODICALS:**

*Bhavan's Journal* : English fortnightly devoted to life, literature and culture, was started in August, 1954.

*Bharati* : A Hindi monthly is being brought out since August, 1956.

*Bharatiya Vidya* : A research quarterly is also published by this Department.

9. **M. M. COLLEGE OF ARTS & N. M. INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE :**

This College of the Bhavan is affiliated to the University of Bombay for courses leading to B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc. and Ph.D. The College has a Gita Academy also.

#### **Kendras outside Bombay**

Bhavan has opened four centres in Delhi, Kanpur, Allahabad and Madras.

The Bhavan has also three centres outside India at Stuttgart in Germany, at California and at Brooklyn in New York.

#### **Associated and Affiliated Institutions**

(1) The Gujarati Sahitya Parishad; (2) The Gujarati Sahitya Sansad; (3) The Bombay Astrological Society; (4) The Bharatiya Stri Seva Sangh.





### THE AUTHOR

Journalist, economist and P.-S.P. leader, Asoka Mehta, M.P., is an able dialectician with considerable reputation as a socialist theoretician. Along with Jayaprakash Narayan and Achyut Patwardhan he had pioneered the Socialist Movement. As Deputy Leader of the Praja-Socialist Party in the Lok Sabha he commands the respect of the Treasury Benches. His report as Chairman of the Food-grains Enquiry Commission of the Government of India is considered as a classic of its kind.

A Wilsonian, Asoka took active part in the Youth Movement of the country and was imprisoned in the first Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932; edited *The Congress-Socialist Weekly*; had a further term of imprisonment for participating in the Individual Satyagraha Movement of 1941 and the 'Quit India' struggle of 1942. He took prominent part in the founding of the Asian Socialist Conference of 1953. He was elected to the Parliament in 1954 and 1957. He has a number of books to his credit, e.g., *Indian Shipping*, *Communal Triangle in India, 1857—the Great Rebellion*, *Who Owns India?*, *Studies in Asian Socialism*, some of which have been translated into several languages both Indian and foreign.